Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

Press Freedom in Wartime

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MARCH, 1941

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LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

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The Editor of LABOUR MONTHLY will be very glad to receive contributions in the form of finished articles or of suggestions and data for articles. The customary proviso must be made that no responsibility is undertaken for manuscripts sent to him nor can he promise to enter into correspondence regarding contributions not accepted.

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Notes of the Month

The "New Order" in Britain?—War and Democracy—Progressive Wars and Reactionary Wars—Social and Political Effects of Imperialist Wars—January 21, 1941—What is Fascism?—How Fascism Comes—The Classic Warning Signals—Is Britain "Different"?—Fascism and Imperialism—What is "Totalitarianism"?—The Class Character of Fascism—Main Characteristics of Fascism—Fascism and Inter-Imperialist Antagonisms—How German Fascism Used Versailles—Why Fascism Conquered in Germany—The Question of a New Versailles—The Lesson of France—Why Fascism Conquered in France—The Warning Lessons for Britain—Morrison Repeats the French and German Path—The Fate of the Wels and Leiparts—The Fate of Blum—Britain's Slower Development—Reasons in British Capitalist Structure—British Capitalism and the Nazi Model—Industrial Conscription—Post-War Plans—"National Unity" After the War—The "Agreed Programme"—Bevin's "New Order"—Saving Capitalism—The Blessing of the Millionaires—Citrine Reassures the American Millionaires—The Crisis is Serious—What Must Be Done—Working Class and Democratic Unity.

ON THE EVE of new and immeasurable extension of the war, the crisis of democracy and the working-class movement in Britain has now fully opened. War is a forcing house of all development, sharpens all contradictions, telescopes the evolution of years into months and days, shatters old and decaying social and political systems, states and empires, and in this sense, by its destructive role, at the cost of heavy human suffering, prepares the way for future revolutionary change. This is the long-range significance of imperialist war, which is the expression of the profound crisis of the dying capitalist system. But in its short-range effect imperialist war, because of its reactionary character, means an enormous strengthening of all reactionary forces. In a popular or democratic war, a war for national or social liberation, and not for maintenance of domination over other peoples, great democratic, social and cultural advances can be achieved even in the midst of war; the people are capable of great sacrifices, and can achieve miracles of organisation and heroism, because they are fighting in their own cause, and a heavy hand is laid on the big property owners and exploiters. This has been shown in the war of democratic Spain; it is being shown to-day in the Chinese national war, despite the serious sabotage of reactionary class interests within the national front; it was still more powerfully shown in the socialist wars of the Soviet Union which defeated the imperialist armies of intervention. But in imperialist war the reverse is the case.

THE internal development in a country at war depends on the character of the war and the class in control. It is not true, as the pacifists allege, that all war necessarily leads to the triumph of reaction. War organisation and war discipline of the strictest kind is not necessarily anti-democratic. It is important to lay this down at the outset, when we come to consider the present proposals for industrial conscription and other measures in Britain, in order to make clear that the militant working-class opposition to these measures, against industrial serfdom of the working masses to the profiteering trusts, or

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against a bastard " national unity " which covers enslavement to the financial oligarchy, is by no means an anarchist opposition to organisation and discipline, but, on the contrary, a most vital fight for the interests and future of the working class and people of this country.

THE examples of the political role of Cromwell's army, or of Jacobin France, show how the ruthless needs of war, if it is a progressive democratic war, can hasten popular advance and strike heavy blows at wealth and privilege. The example of the Napoleonic wars, of the wars of Pitt and the British oligarchy against Napoleonic Europe (the favourite historical analogy of Churchill, the *Times* and official spokesmen for the present war), which, conducted in the name of British " liberation " of Europe from a " tyrant," ended in monarchist restoration and the crushing weight of the Holy Alliance on Europe, and in Peterloo, the Six Acts and the police terrorism of Castlereagh for Britain, shows how a reactionary war intensifies reaction at home. The internal social and political situation of a country at war is thus inseparably connected with the character of the war ; the two aspects cannot be taken in isolation ; each reacts upon the other. If, therefore, it is necessary this month, in the midst of the many wide new questions of the war opening out on the whole world front, to concentrate attention on the internal crisis in Britain, this by no means implies a separation of domestic questions from the wider issues of the war, whose advance is now bringing the sharpest problems for the British people. On the contrary, the internal crisis in Britain is a crucial expression of the present stage of the war, and its outcome will have the most far-reaching effect on the further development of the war.

ONE of the sharpest tests of the imperialist character of a war, and disproof of the cant of a popular democratic war, is thus the character of the internal development which accompanies it. In an imperialist war, where monopoly capital rules, and where millions of propertyless men are compelled to fight for the power and possessions and world empires of their masters, reaction is invariably strengthened—up to the point where the contradictions grow too strong for it and the rising struggle opens out into a revolutionary situation. 1914-16 saw the strengthening of reaction in all the countries at war. But in the present war, at a far later stage of capitalism, at a more advanced stage of capitalist monopoly and decay, with sharper social and national contradictions, and after the working out of the technique of Fascism, this strengthening of reaction is more intense and more rapid. The concentration of capital is enormously accelerated at the expense of all smaller enterprises, producers and traders, as well as the wage-workers. The most powerful sections of monopoly capital entrench themselves in the State machine. In those imperialist states where the forms of parliamentary democracy and independent working-class organisation were still maintained, the ruling dominant representatives of the banks and trusts strive to use the war emergency in order to destroy democratic rights and to corrupt, paralyse and disrupt the labour movement. The consequences are reflected in a political transformation which—in the name of the fight for democracy against Fascism—destroys the basis of democracy and drives towards the Fascist type of war economy and social and political organisation. This process developed with extreme speed in France, which was already deeply rotted, economically, socially and politically, before the war began. It is now developing in Britain and preparing in the United States.

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WHAT is happening in Britain? There was never more need to estimate in the most objective and realist fashion the changes which are taking place and where they are leading; for the issues are the most serious in the whole experience of the working-class movement. The fateful day of January 21, 1941, constitutes a landmark whose significance will stand out the more as it recedes. The day which saw the suppression of the only independent non-governmental daily newspaper of the working class and democratic movement at the hands of a Labour Home Secretary saw also the announcement by a Labour Minister of Labour of the plans for industrial conscription, by which the entire working population is to be legally tied to profit-making capitalist monopoly enterprise and disarmed of the weapons of self-defence. It was immediately followed next day by the announcement by a Tory Prime Minister, laying down the tasks for a Labour Minister of Reconstruction, of the plans for the continuance of "national unity" as in wartime for three years after the war. These three signals have been widely recognised as the signals of a "new order" now being actively prepared in Britain.

YET the full extent of the change that is being inaugurated in the whole social and political structure in this country is still only partially realised. The general terms "Fascism" or "Hitlerism" or "Nazism" have been of late so freely and indiscriminately bandied about by every type of political tendency and colour from right to left as a universal term of denunciation for anything to which it is desired to express opposition, that the plain, original, serious and scientific class meaning of these terms has become overlaid and hidden from general clearness. They have become emotional slogans to arouse passionate opposition; but the same thing needs only to be served up in a slightly different dress for it not to be recognised by many who are the most vehement in denouncing the name. Hence the mere affirmation that the measures now being introduced in this country are of a type to lead to full-blooded Fascism (not in contradiction to the war aims of the ruling class, but in accordance with their real war aims) by no means yet brings general conviction, clearness or alertness to the menace, because such affirmations will still be widely regarded as conventional propagandist exaggerations. Hence it is necessary to come much closer to the concrete facts of what is happening at present here and to relate these facts to the general principles and historical understanding and experience of Fascism or "National Socialism."

FOR indeed we have considerable experience, for nearly twenty years now, of the crisis of democracy in country after country of Europe, the break-up of working-class rights and the coming of Fascism. We have in this country the advantage of these lessons, although that advantage will be a vain one if we do not use it. The experience of country after country has shown that the measures which directly destroy the basis of democracy and prepare the way for Fascism are always introduced first within the existing state forms (there never has been and never can be a Fascist "revolution," since revolution means the transference of power from one class to another, whereas Fascism is only a change in the form of the continuous bourgeois dictatorship, and is therefore always introduced under the protection of the higher military and official authorities—the "march on Rome" always takes place in a wagon-lit). Second, the same experience has shown that these measures are always first introduced *in the name of the fight against the menace of Fascism* ("Support Hindenburg to defeat Hitler"; "Support Dollfuss-Schuschnigg to defeat the Nazis"; "Support Daladier-Reynaud-Blum-Petain and shoot the Communists to save France from Hitlerism"; "Support Churchill-Bevin-Halifax and suppress

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the *Daily Worker* to save England from Hitlerism," etc.). Third, Fascism is always introduced with the aid of the reactionary leadership within the Labour movement, which disrupts and divides the Labour movement from within and directs its fire against the left, while entering into coalition with the political representatives of capitalist reaction. Fourth, Fascism always begins with the offensive against Communism, which, if not checked, is then rapidly extended to all sections of the left and so to the whole Labour movement.

ALL these symptoms are classic. And all these symptoms are now present in Britain. Indeed, it is incidentally worth noting, as a straw in the wind, that already within three weeks of the suppression of the *Daily Worker*, supposedly on the grounds of the denunciation of Communism as opposed to imperialist war, the Means Test debate in Parliament on February 13 has seen the Labour Front Bench applying the same technique of vituperation, previously reserved for Communists, against Left Labour M.P.'s who had sought in every way to demarcate themselves from the Communists, and whose only crime was to make a stand for the most elementary working-class interests on the basis of Labour Conference decisions and an unfulfilled Tory pledge, and who now find themselves denounced, in the same way as the Communists, as " wreckers " and " saboteurs." The wheel moves quickly.

THERE is, therefore, on the face of it, a basis for raising sharply the issue, not as a rhetorical denunciation, but as an objective measurement of facts, that the same process which we have witnessed in country after country of Europe over twenty years, ending in the destruction of the working-class movement and democracy, in Italy, in Germany, in Austria, and most recently in France, has definitely begun here. Must it end the same way? The same blind, complacent apologetic cries that " it can't happen here," that " Britain is different," that there is " no parallel " with what happened in other countries, that the workers can " trust their leaders in the Government," that the measures are " temporary," that there are adequate " safeguards," are being repeated once again. If the course is the same, and is allowed to continue the same, only incurable self-deluders will assume that the outcome can be different. Must the same deadly history be repeated once again, this time in the classic country of capitalism with the oldest working-class movement? This is the most urgent question now before the working-class and democratic movement. Every other question—including the question of the defence of the freedom of the British people from foreign aggression, in the name of which the " sacrifices " are demanded—is bound up with the answer to this question.

IN order to judge this situation, it is necessary first to ask an elementary question. What is Fascism, "Hitlerism," or Nazism ("National Socialism")? These terms, as we have remarked above, have been worn so threadbare of late with use and misuse, including by politicians who have been in the past the greatest friends and admirers of their systems and now present themselves as champions for their overthrow, that their real meaning has been lost to sight. Fascism has become in common usage either a general term of abuse for every form of violence or reaction, or a general descriptive term for German and Italian imperialism, against which Anglo-American imperialism is conducting a conflict for the domination of the world. Hence the " fight against Fascism " is presented as identical with the fight of Anglo-American imperialism against German-Italian-Japanese imperialism. This is the little jugglery which leads to all the confusion and actually opens the way to the introduction of Fascism

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in the name of the fight against it. Such a confusion is only possible when the real meaning of Fascism is lost to sight. Fascism, in place of being seen in class terms, is identified with a specific imperialism, and behind the cover of this substitution the class enemy is able to deliver his offensive. In the name of the " fight against Fascism " democracy is destroyed. In the name of " national defence " the leaders of the four hundred millions of India who seek to rid their country of the invader are thrown into prison by the apostles of " national defence."

FASCISM is not a general descriptive term for every form of violence and reaction. Tsarism was a violent and reactionary autocracy which suppressed the working-class movement and Liberalism; but Tsarism was not Fascism. British rule in India is a reactionary autocratic system which has provided many models of technique for subsequent imitation by Fascism, so much so that even a Gandhi can write not without reason that " the vast majority of the people of India make no distinction between Nazism and the double autocracy that rules India " (letter to the Viceroy of September 30, 1940). But British rule in India is not the same as Fascism. Still less useful are the descriptions of Fascism which define it in abstract terms of " dictatorship " and " totalitarianism " without class content. Socialism is an extremely " totalitarian " system in the sense of being a unified social and political organisation which completely finishes with the old Liberal free-trade " freedom of enterprise," " freedom of property," " freedom of contract," " freedom " to live on the labour of others, " freedom " to poison, deceive and rob the people, and all the rest of the individualist anarchy which conceals the real enslavement of the mass of the population. But Socialism is characterised by the abolition of classes, so that the so-called " totalitarian " system is only the expression of the social ownership and organisation of the means of production, which, by compelling all to participate equally in the labour of society, and enabling all to share in its fruits on the basis of their labour (finally, in Communist society, on the basis of needs alone), ends the exploitation of one section of society by another and provides the indispensable foundation for universal free and equal citizenship, for real freedom.

FASCISM, on the other hand, seeks to combine the formally " unified " system of organisation, the replacement of Liberal capitalism by State monopolist control and organisation, with the maintenance of classes—the division of the population into the property-owning class, the owners of the big monopolist trusts, who live by their ownership, and the propertyless wage workers, the majority of the population (together with the fast-dwindling body of small proprietors, who are reduced, under State control and regulation, to conditions of enforced dependence on the trusts more and more comparable to the conditions of the wage-workers, or are directly displaced and reduced to the proletariat), who labour for the profit of the owning class. This attempted combination of the unified State organisation of economy and society (caricaturing Socialism—hence its self-description as " national Socialism " and all the " Socialist " claptrap) with the maintenance of classes is the essence of Fascism, from which all else follows. For of course the formally " unified " system, since it is based on capitalism, does not in fact resolve the contradictions of capitalism, but only seeks violently to overcome them. In the field of economy, the " unification " conceals the domination of the most powerful sections of monopoly capital over the weaker sections and over small property. In the social field the formal " abolition of the class struggle," since it is incapable of resolving the class struggle, which can only be resolved by the abolition of classes, finds its necessary expression in the attempted violent suppression of

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the class struggle, that is, in the attempted violent suppression of the independent working-class movement and the destruction of democratic rights which provide the field for the legal organisation of the working class.

FASCISM is thus a form of dictatorship of monopoly capital. It is a form appearing at a late stage in monopoly capitalist development, during the general crisis of capitalism, after the international working-class revolution has opened, when all the economic, social and political contradictions of capitalism have become extremely acute. It is a form characteristic of a high degree of monopoly capitalist concentration, and greatly accelerates further concentration. It is a form characteristic of an advanced stage of the class struggle, when the old Liberal (or, in the post-war form, Social Democratic) methods of deception of the workers and attempted conciliation of the class struggle no longer prove adequate for the maintenance of capitalist supremacy, and it becomes necessary for the capitalist dictatorship to proceed to open repressive measures and terrorist methods. Fascism promotes in the economic field the close fusion of the State machine with the banks and trusts. Corresponding to this narrowed economic dictatorship, Fascism re-moulds the forms of the State to reflect the open political domination of the ruling oligarchy, restricts the sphere of Parliament, and seeks to subject all forms of political expression and organisation to unified governmental control. To curb the class struggle, Fascism abolishes the right to strike, establishes state regulation of wages, prices and labour conditions, and replaces independent working-class organisation by the "corporate system" or "labour front," the joint organisation of the workers, employers and state representatives under the control of the dictatorship of monopoly capital. For propaganda purposes all these measures are covered up under social demagogy about the "new type of (German, British, French, etc.) socialism," "social security," "community of interests," "national unity," "abolition of capitalist exploitation," "restriction of profits," "replacement of the profit motive by social service," "recognition of the rights of labour," etc.—all which is contrasted with the sinister disruptive aims of "Marxism" or "Communism," which is presented as the enemy underlying every form of opposition or independent expression. Corresponding to the expansionist imperialist aims of the dominant sections of monopoly capital, Fascism organises the entire society for war, and freely uses the mask of "national patriotism" (alongside "religion" and "spiritual regeneration") to conceal its aims, together with denunciations of "treachery" against all opposing forces. All these characteristics of Fascism are characteristics of the open, violent dictatorship of the most powerful, reactionary, chauvinist sections of monopoly capital.

ONCE this class character of Fascism is clearly and firmly understood, the fantastic and suicidal folly of seeing Fascism as the peculiar invention and system of one or another imperialist country, instead of as the common tendency towards which all monopoly capital increasingly drives, with varying degrees of success according to the relations of class forces within each country, becomes manifest. The driving force towards Fascism within each imperialist country is the ruling monopoly capitalist oligarchy within that country, and, in particular, the most reactionary sections of that oligarchy. The defence of the people against Fascism depends on the strength and independence of the working-class front, in unity with all democratic forces against monopoly capital. The conditions of this struggle interact with the inter-imperialist antagonisms, which are always used by the monopoly capitalist rulers within each country for the furtherance of their internal aims; the whole experience of the years since 1931 has furnished especially rich lessons of this interaction.

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THUS in Germany Fascism utilised the national subjection and Versailles enslavement of the German people, consequent on the military defeat of 1918, for the purposes of its demagogic propaganda, in order to assist its advent to power; just as to-day it uses the threats of a super-Versailles and proclamations of war on the German people and dismemberment of Germany broadcast by a Duff-Cooper or a Vansittart in order to strengthen its hold and maintain "morale" (the "morale" of the sheep in the slaughterhouse). The military defeat of the German people in 1918 was the counterpart of the German Revolution, the reflection of the revolt of the German people against the imperialist war, which overthrew Kaiserism and came near to winning Socialism, but was robbed of its fruits, first, because of the role of German Social Democracy, and second, because the British and French working-class movements were then still too backward to be capable of fulfilling their part alongside the German and Russian workers and uniting with them to establish a Socialist Europe—hence all these tears and the more difficult problems we have to meet to-day.

GERMAN Fascism utilised the military defeat of 1918 and the Versailles enslavement in order to discredit the German revolution and facilitate its own advent to power by promising to remedy the just national grievances of the German people and by falsely attributing all their social and economic sufferings to Versailles. But German Fascism did not come to power because of the military defeat of 1918 and Versailles. The immediate sequel of the military defeat saw the heaviest blows to German reaction that it has ever known. German Fascism came to power because of the disruption of the German working class by Social Democracy and its policy of coalition with capitalism and war on Communism. German Fascism came to power because the united revolutionary working-class leadership was lacking to show the German people the true path from their miseries by the overthrow of capitalism, and to lead the way to liberation from Versailles by the establishment of a strong Socialist Germany in unity with Socialist Russia, capable of throwing off the bonds of Versailles by its own strength and by the same international working-class solidarity which Socialist Russia had evoked, instead of through the path of a bloody war of revenge for new annexationist bandit aims only capable of bringing new sufferings for the German people. German Fascism came to power because Social Democracy in the final crisis refused the united working-class front and preferred the path of unity behind the Conservative leader, Hindenburg, who placed Hitler in power.

SIMILARLY with regard to the menace of a new Versailles. It is true that it would be a disaster for the German people to be overrun and dismembered and subjected to a new and even more terrible Versailles as threatened by their imperialist enemies, at whose hands they have already had such bitter experience of the consequences of defeat. But it does not follow from this that their path forward lies through national unity behind Hitler as the only way to avert such a disaster. This would be only to seal their own enslavement. Their path forward lies still through their own independent class struggle and action to secure their own liberation, and then to strive, on the basis of international working-class solidarity and the international unity of the peoples, to secure that the peace which follows the war shall not be a new Versailles, but a just and democratic peace of the peoples.

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IN France Fascism utilised the war from the outset, in order to strike down democracy, suppress the Communist press and the Communist Party, disfranchise and imprison the working-class deputies, dissolve the democratically elected municipal councils, disrupt the trade unions and gag the press; and then utilised the subsequent military defeat, which it had systematically prepared and deliberately provoked and assisted, in order to complete its transformation of the State. But French Fascism did not come to power because of the military defeat. On the contrary, the military defeat followed the betrayal of French democracy to Fascism. The complete mystification of the French situation in the British press, and the attempt to reduce it to the dimensions of a tenth-rate scandalous chronicle or Oppenheim international spy romance, follows precisely because the real class basis of French Fascism cannot be admitted, and the Pétains, Weygands and Lavals have to be treated as individual "Quislings" or hireling agents of a foreign conqueror, instead of as the political representatives of the decisive sections of the French bourgeoisie, pursuing a continuous, consistent and long-prepared line of policy, primarily devoted to the maintenance of their immediate class interests in a critical situation (the imperialist position of France having been already wrecked by British policy before the war began, and the internal situation taking precedence), and in foreign policy pursuing an anti-British "Pan-European" Franco-German collaborationist line which has always existed as a powerful alternative trend in French foreign policy. It is worth recalling at this moment, when so much nonsense is being written about "the collapse of France," as if it were a bolt from the blue arising only after the outbreak of war, that already *in November*, 1938, immediately following Munich, we wrote in these Notes that the effect of Munich and the policy of Daladier meant that "*the French bourgeoisie, to save their class power, have committed suicide as a Great Power.*"

THE Pétains, Weygands, Bonnets, Lavals, Chiappes and Ybarnegarays, the Comité des Forges, the Editors of the *Temps* and the *Journal* and the "great press," together with the infamous anti-democratic gutter press, the *Gringoires* and the like, and the network of organisations throughout the country, conspired continuously for years before this war broke out. It was years ago that Marshal Lyautey, the "hero" of France alongside Pétain and Weygand, declared openly that he felt infinitely closer to Hitler and his class allies in Germany than to French democracy. French Fascism, with the clamorous support, connivance and protection of official France and the "great press," of all the decisive sections of the French bourgeoisie with the exception of a handful of individual representatives, attempted coup after coup in the years preceding the war, through the Stavisky scandal, the 1934 march on Parliament, the Cagoulards, etc. But so long as the united working-class front and the People's Front was maintained, they were powerless to carry out their aims. Only when the united working-class front was broken by the betrayal of the French "Socialist" Party, only when the French "Socialists," the Blums and Serols, united in a Coalition Government with French Conservatism and Fascism, with the Pétains and Ybarnegarays, to outlaw Communism, smash the trade unions and pass the Death Decree against Communists through a "Socialist" Minister of Justice, only then was French democracy broken. Only then the "hour" of French Fascism came, and French Fascism was able to come to power; and eighty-five French "Socialist" deputies completed their apostasy by voting for the Vichy "Constitution" of Pétain.

TO the question: How does Fascism come to power? How are great and powerful working-class movements destroyed? the answer is therefore clear, and two decades of experience are now behind it. Fascism comes to power

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only when working class unity is broken, when the independent class line of fight is abandoned, when the superior strength of the workers is sapped and destroyed by the agents of reaction at the head of the working-class organisations. Fascism comes to power when the reactionary leaders of the Labour movement, in the name of " national unity," combine in Coalition Governments with the leaders of Conservatism. Fascism comes to power when the reactionary leaders of the Labour movement unite with the leaders of Conservatism to destroy democracy, to suppress working-class and democratic rights, to disrupt the trade unions, to turn the fire on Communism, to suppress the Communist press. This is the lesson of history. Let the British working-class movement learn the lesson before it is too late.

HERBERT MORRISON in his speech in Parliament on January 28 defending the suppression of the *Daily Worker* claimed that he had "learned the lessons" of Germany and France: "I have learned it, and I am applying in this office the lessons I have learned." This instrument of the present Goverment should endeavour to get someone to acquaint him with the elementary facts before he opens his mouth. He claims that the lesson he has learned is that in " the unfortunate German Republic under the Weimar Constitution decision in government was lacking and weak " ; therefore Fascism conquered. In other words, the German Republic and German Social Democracy was " weak " —in dealing with Fascism ; therefore he, Morrison, will be " strong "—in dealing with Communism. Unfortunately this is only " learning the lesson " parrot-fashion, to repeat exactly what they did. This is the exact boast that German Social Democracy made. German Social Democracy was very " strong "—in dealing with the Communists. It armed the White Guards to butcher them and hounded on the murder of Liebknecht and Luxembourg. That was infamous ; but it was hardly " weak " and " lacking in decision." The German Social Democratic Government prohibited the May Day demonstration in 1929 and shot the workers who dared to demonstrate on May Day. No " weakness " there. Certainly German Social Democracy was at pains to release its Fascist prisoners. So has Herbert Morrison released the great part of the Fascist internees whom Anderson had arrested. As late as 1932 the Prussian Social Democratic Government of Braun and Severing boasted in a Memorandum to Hindenburg, to prove their " strong hand " in dealing with the left, that it could " prove with police statistics " that its police action " has caused more deaths on the left than on the right." The outcome of this kind of " strength " of Social Democracy is Germany to-day.

UNDOUBTEDLY the German Social Democratic leadership thought that they would always be safe, so long as they faithfully served monopoly capital and dealt sternly with Communism. This may also be the secret dream of Transport House, which is confident that the "new order" in Britain can only operate through the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress as the necessary machinery for disciplining the workers and defeating Communism. But the examples of Germany and France are not encouraging even to these ignominious ambitions. Even after Hitler came to power, the German Social Democratic leaders vowed their loyalty to Hitler. German Social Democracy joined in the unanimous vote of confidence in the Hitler Government's resolution in the Reichstag in May, 1933. The German Trade Union Federation leadership offered Hitler the benefit of their unrivalled experience in dealing with labour problems. In vain. " The Leiparts and the Grassmanns," declared Dr. Ley with regard to the Trade Union Federation leadership, " may profess their devotion to Hitler ; but they are better in prison." They

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were "better in prison," not because there was any doubt of their utter spinelessness and servility, but because, however much they might swear their devotion, they could not answer for the base of their organisations, where the honest class-conscious workers were; the organisations had to be broken, and therefore even the spineless leaders, vowing devotion to Fascism, were "better in prison." The Trades Union Congress General Council might ponder this lesson with advantage.

BLUM also proudly boasted to the Bournemouth Labour Party Conference in May, 1940, amid the enthusiastic plaudits of the right-wing bureaucrats, how "strong" he had been in dealing with the Communists, in expelling the elected Communist deputies from Parliament and imposing the Death Decree for Communists; "in a democracy there must be limits and restrictions"; these were necessary measures of a united people for dealing with "traitors" and "agents of a foreign Power." And the real traitors, who, from their places of power, even while he spoke the words, were planning their coup? They were his honoured colleagues whom he was assisting to jail the honest leaders of the working class and break up the working-class organisations. No hint of a danger from the Right in this "epoch-making" speech of the leader of French "Socialism" on May 15, 1940. Scarcely had he completed his speech and returned to France than he found himself in a Fascist prison placed under guard by those same honoured colleagues whom he had so proudly assisted to smash the working-class movement. From the inside of a Fascist prison Blum can contemplate the brilliant outcome of his statesmanship from those so few short years ago when he was at the head of the triumphant People's Front which held France at its feet. Perhaps even Attlee and Morrison might contemplate this lesson with advantage.

WHAT then, is the conclusion that we should draw to judge the present situation in Britain in the light of this analysis? The crisis of democracy which has developed successively in the other leading countries of Europe has come last to Britain. Undoubtedly the rate of development has been—up to the present—slower, more ponderous, more leisurely, less far-reaching in this country. The light-hearted might jump to the conclusion that this means that the issues will never reach the same intensity here as in the Continental countries, that Britain will continue to go its own gait, that Britain is basically "different," that there will be no "extremes," that the reactionary offensive will take milder forms and prove no more than a temporary wartime restriction of rights, as it is officially presented, to be rapidly followed by a restoration of the old order. But a more careful consideration of the reasons for this relatively slower development will leave little encouragement for these self-consoling delusions. There are solid reasons for this slower development, which is characteristic of the whole period of the capitalist decline in Britain. So, too, Britain long remained the citadel of free trade, the apparent anomaly and exception, in a world in which the general law of the tariff policy of imperialism had been long established for every other imperialist country. But the citadel fell in 1931.

THE structure of British capitalism took on its characteristic shape in the Liberal free trade nineteenth century era, the era of Britain's industrial world monopoly. The very conditions which led to the priority of British capitalism in this era led to its backwardness in the succeeding imperialist era. In technique and rate of development it fell behind its younger rivals. It

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was long observed that the process of trustification, and the fusion of banking with industry, advanced more slowly in Britain than in Germany or America. This slower development was associated with and reflected the special conditions of British capitalism, its privileged world position, its entrenched colonial monopoly and the consequent accumulated reserves at its disposal. This privileged world position had its political reflection in the Liberal system and tradition; the greater wealth and world spoliation made possible the first development here of the labour aristocracy, the basis of Liberal-Labourism; it provided the resources for the technique of concessions, of conciliating, buying off and corrupting the Labour movement rather than allowing the class struggle to reach to extremes. Hence the theories of exceptionalism of British politics, of British parliamentarianism, of the British Labour movement. Indeed, it was long argued that socialism and a political Labour movement, such as had developed on the Continent, could never develop in Britain. But this illusion was smashed already with the twentieth century.

THIS traditional character of the old British capitalism has vanished never to return. Its basis was steadily weakened since the beginning of the twentieth century, still more markedly since the war of 1914, and most rapidly since the world economic crisis. The trustification of British capitalism is now extremely high, and comparable to that of Germany or the United States. The present war has acted as a forcing house to hasten forward the development of state-organised monopoly capitalism, with the Industrial and Raw Material Controllers appointed from the largest combines in charge of every sphere. "The City has now taken over Whitehall. . . The Bank of England is probably more powerful in the financial affairs of this country than it has been for years." (*Evening Standard*, July 3, 1940.) The political forms of state emergency dictatorship and government by decree have now been fully established within the shell of inoperative democracy, suspended elections, the coalition of official parties and a unified and controlled press.

AT the same time the basis for concessions to the workers has been weakened. It was already heavily weakened since the world economic crisis. Under war conditions it has been replaced by the demand for a ruthless reduction of standards to meet the requirements of war economy and the restriction of consumption and imports. An adverse balance of trade of £660 million and a prospective budget deficit of £3,000 million leave little room for Liberalism. These economic requirements, at a time when the wartime demand for labour would normally place the highest bargaining power in the hands of the workers, make imperative in the eyes of monopoly capital the suspension of the free bargaining rights of the workers, the abolition of the right to strike, the increasing state regulation of wages and labour conditions, and the whole series of measures associated with industrial conscription; and, as the necessary counterpart of this, the smashing of all militant working-class activity and resistance, and the integration of trade union and labour organisation with capitalism and the State. Only the wilfully blind could fail to see how complete a transformation this means of the entire economic, social and political structure, in which, within the framework of continued monopoly capitalism, scarcely a stone is left standing of the old traditional Britain.

WARTIME monopoly capitalist organisation, economic and political, approximates more and more towards Fascist economic and political organisation, and indeed the spokesmen of capitalism now begin to refer without concealment, especially in the financial press, to the Nazi system as the

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model. But this transformation, although accelerated at a hurricane pace by the war, only continues and extends tendencies already implicit in pre-war capitalism, and is seen by the capitalists themselves in their wishful thinking as preparing the blue-print of organisation for post-war capitalism. As Bevin stated at Glasgow in December: "If we are driven to imitate any part of the Nazi regime, in the name of greater efficiency, it is going to be difficult to cut it out afterwards." The whole line of recent utterances; the stressing of the necessity for the continuance of the economic controls after the war; the speculations on "national unity" and on "agreed programme" after the war: all indicate how the current of ruling-class thought and of its Labour reflection see more and more consciously in the present forms of organisation, not merely a temporary wartime emergency, but the preparation of the forms of organisation of post-war capitalism, alike in relation to the stormy social and political conditions which are seen as following the war and in relation to the needs of the intensified economic war which is equally seen as following the war. Only the most complacent can therefore be contented to see in the present intensified dictatorship, emergency measures, destruction of democratic liberties and trade union rights, and increasing sacrifices demanded of the workers, merely a temporary wartime exigency, which can be turned on and off like a tap, and not the expression of the driving forces of modern monopoly capitalism, involving the whole future of the working class and democracy in this country.

Of especial significance in this connection is the discussion of "national unity" after the war. Churchill's statement on January 22 was explicit, with regard to the tasks of the Minister of Reconstruction: first, that "it is not his task to make a new world . . . it is not his duty to set up a new order" (*i.e.*, the reconstruction must be capitalist reconstruction, not socialist); and second, that for this purpose (*i.e.*, to save capitalism and defeat any post-war revolutionary surge or demand for socialism) there must be "the same kind of national unity" as in wartime for a minimum period of "about three years." This is the official Government programme, and has not been repudiated. On the contrary, it has been confirmed by every subsequent utterance. Since this proclamation blew into thin air all the pipe-dreams spread in the earlier period of the war by the Labour chauvinists about a wonderful new socialist world to arise miraculously out of the filth and mess of the war and the repudiation of the class struggle, it became necessary for the Labour Party leaders and the *Daily Herald* to issue statement after statement to appease the alarm of their followers. But every statement only confirmed the original programme.

Thus Attlee at Oxford on January 24, after serving out the soothing syrup in the vaguest form ("After the war we shall again have those healthy differences of opinion which are the lifeblood of democracy; we shall have governments of various complexions facing Oppositions, as in the past"), proceeded to declare that "We have to find the greatest common measure of agreement between all parties, and there is much common ground. . . . I cannot prophesy what will happen after the war, but we are working out a basis on which we can agree." The Chairman of the Labour Party, James Walker, declared in an interview in *Reynolds' News* on February 9 that "I think it is premature at the moment to express dogmatic opinion either for or against collaboration after the war, because the question will be decided very largely by what is done during the war and on the circumstances prevailing when the war is finished." And the Political Correspondent of the *Daily Herald* explained on January 28 that "Nobody wants another khaki election. It is generally

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agreed that an interval is necessary in which the present Executive can steer us . . . There is obviously sufficient agreement to permit far-reaching planning for the technical job of swinging a war machine over to the tasks of peace." Thus an election after the war is to be delayed: that is, the present obsolete Parliament, with an overwhelming Tory majority, is to be continued: "the present Executive," that is, a dominantly Tory Government with Labour collaboration, is to continue in office; on this basis, of a Tory Government and Parliament, an "agreed programme," that is, a programme acceptable to a Tory majority, is to be carried out; this is to continue for "about three years" after the war. No wonder there is a crisis in the membership of the Labour Party.

No less significant is the character of the talk about a "new order" in Britain now being put out by the major Labour Party and trade union leadership (as opposed to the small fry, who still peddle the old socialist promises). The new terminology takes on more and more the familiar Nazi shape, until almost every phrase can be paralleled from the Nazi programme and propaganda. Bevin declares that the aim must be "social security" and that profit must no longer be "the only motive" for production:—

> "My war aims are summed up in the phrase: The motive of our life should be social security. . . . We have been taught that the only motive for production and enterprise is profit. . . . If profit can be the only motive the natural corollary is economic disorder. . . . I suggest that at the end of this war, and indeed during the war, we accept Social Security as the main motive of all our national life. This does not mean that all profits or surpluses should be wiped out, but it does mean that the whole of your economy, finance, organisation, science and everything would be directed together to social security, not for a small middle class, or for those who may be mere possessors of property, but for the community as a whole. . . . What I am horrified at is a blind revolution." (Bevin at the Rotarian Club, November 20, 1940.)

To emphasise the protection of "profits" and "possessors of property" in the new Labour conception the *Daily Herald* added an editorial:—

> "Mr. Bevin said last week that social security and not profit should be the motive of our national life.
>
> "And Mr. Bevin is sharply rebuked by a Tory newspaper. He is told in a patronising tone that profit must go on playing a part in our lives, and that social security is already one of the objectives of political effort. But in that case why quarrel with Mr. Bevin, who admitted that all profit could not be abolished?" (*Daily Herald*, November 21, 1940.)

And Hamilton Fyfe pointed the moral:—

> "Bevin has put himself at the head of all who, disregarding political parties, are uniting in the demand that we should make this reply to Hitler and show the world we have done with the Old Order and with profit as the only motive." (*Reynolds' News*, November 25, 1940.)

Actually, of course, these are the very words in which Hitler describes his "New Order" (rejection of profit as "the only motive").

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CITRINE is bolder. In an interview to the *Daily Herald* he declares :—

> "It will be a better Britain after this war. I cannot see, for instance, the railways going back to private ownership." (Sir Walter Citrine, in the *Daily Herald*, December 27, 1940.)

He further expresses the view that there ought not to be "masses of unemployed" any more (only the necessary industrial reserve army required by capitalism). Here Bevin is in agreement with him, when he declared in his broadcast on October 26, 1940, that "we will never tolerate again the masses of unemployed." This was in some contradiction to his previous recommendation of war savings to prepare for post-war unemployment :—

> "When the boys are demobilised and the cannon have ceased to roar, there is bound to be a period while we are readjusting and re-equipping all our industries for peace-time production. What a grand thing it will be if all the little extras you get now you put on one side, and in the piping times of peace, when the enemies are defeated, you use it to maintain your standard of living. Unemployment pay won't be enough of itself, and these nest-eggs will be invaluable." (Bevin, broadcast, January 11, 1940.)

GREENWOOD is against "abject poverty" (a normal decent poverty is obviously suitable for the masses) :—

> "Britain after the war will not tolerate the tragic spectacle of abject poverty." (Greenwood, Empire broadcast, January, 1941.)

Morrison, inspired to daring thoughts at a Dorchester Hotel lunch, is in favour of the rich being as kind and sacrificing for the benefit of the poor after the war as they have been during the war ; and his millionaire audience eagerly assented :—

> "Morrison, elaborating the Bevin speech to the Rotarians, urged that the sacrifices of wartime, made willingly by the rich, should continue when peace came.
>
> "It is significant that Lord Nuffield said to Lord Nathan, the Chairman, afterwards : 'I agree with every word of the speech—
> —and I am a millionaire.'" (*Daily Herald*, December 12, 1940.)

LEST there should still be any Rip Van Winkles who believe that the Labour Party stands theoretically for Socialism, Citrine has been at pains to reassure the timid American millionaires :—

> "He deprecated as fantastic the idea of a great post-war social revolution in Great Britain, because the working classes were now getting so many of their objectives achieved." (Sir Walter Citrine at Toronto, *Times*, January 25, 1941.)

And again :—

> "Sir Walter Citrine's tour has been a great success. . . . In particular, it has had a reassuring effect on those who feared that Britain was turning or would turn into a Socialistic State." (*Daily Telegraph*, January 29, 1941.)

The parody of Nazism from start to finish is so complete as to justify the bitterest jibe of all. That jibe was spoken by Hitler in his speech in January when he accused the Labour Party of stealing the Nazi programme. Hitler should know.

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TAKE the sum-total of these declarations (a sample spoonful from an ocean) of the " new order " in Britain as now seen and held up to the workers by the principal and most representative leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions. These declarations would be comic if they were not the declarations of men who hold in their hands the control, the almost despotic control, of the mass organisations of a great working-class movement, a movement with a long history and world responsibilities in the oldest country of capitalism, a movement stemming from Chartism, from the Tolpuddle martyrs, from men who gave their lives for the emancipation of the working class, and now faced with the greatest crisis in its history—for these organisations to be turned into a mockery for Tory masters and made the stepping-stones for the Fascist enslavement of the workers. Take these declarations and combine them into a theory, a system, a perspective—as clear as daylight and as shameless as treason. Combine that theory with their practice: the suppression of the only paper built by the pennies of the workers in order to give free play for the lie-sheets of the millionaires; the abolition of the right to strike; the sledge-hammer blows of discipline against every militant working-class activity and organisation; the flaunting wining and dining with the profiteers and protection of their profits. Yes; the crisis of the working-class movement at the present point is serious; the offensive of monopoly capital is serious. It is urgently necessary that every socialist and trade unionist should realise clearly what is happening and make a stand before it is too late, if they are not to see their organisations handed over to a capitalist totalitarian system, their rights and freedom destroyed in the name of the battle for freedom, and the " new order " finally blossoming in its full glory as the British version of " national socialism."

A STAND needs to be made for the most elementary working-class and democratic rights as the condition for all further advance: for the independence of the working class and the effective democratic functioning of its organisations; for the raising of the ban on the *Daily Worker*; for the protection of trade union rights and conditions in all the present measures of industrial organisation; for the protection of the rights of the shop stewards and their effective functioning against the various forms of open or veiled victimisation and interference. This stand needs to be combined with the fight for the protection of the standards of the people; for the winning of the wage demands which have been put forward in the various industries; and for a democratic organisation of food supplies in the interests of the working people in place of the present inequitable distribution in the interests of the big food combines and wealthy consumers. The argument that any stand for the rights and interests of the people against enslavement to the monopolists and profiteers is contrary to the needs of the defence of the people against foreign domination is a false argument which needs once and for all to be nailed to the counter and smashed; for this is the type of argument by which Fascism establishes its domination. It is obvious that there is no one in the working-class or democratic movement who wishes to see the domination of the people of this country by foreign conquest; only the most stupid, deliberate and malicious liars put forward this calumny. But the first condition for the real defence of the people is a powerful, united and independent working-class movement. Only a powerful, united and independent working-class movement, rallying and leading all sections of the people, can defend the people against all their enemies, equally against home Fascism or foreign enslavement. The Programme of the People's Convention has shown the way forward for the people of this country.

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In this stand for elementary democratic rights against the capitalist totalitarian offensive the co-operation of the widest front of all working-class and democratic representatives and organisations, irrespective of their views on other issues, of all sections of the people, is the essential condition for victory. In further pages in this month's number we print a symposium of contributions from leading democratic representatives, of varying political outlook on general questions, in relation to the urgent issues raised by the suppression of the *Daily Worker*. Some of the contributors to this symposium express certain criticisms of the Communist Party and Communist policy, even while admitting that they have not read any statement of Communist policy and that they derive their criticisms from second-hand denunciations by opponents. We may hope that they will in time acquaint themselves further with Communist policy, and that it will be possible to remove many of these misconceptions. But this is not the main immediate issue. The important thing is that they do unite in opposing this suppression of the only independent non-governmental working-class and democratic newspaper. The present grave hour calls for the fullest and most active co-operation of all workers and democrats who are prepared to make a stand for the defence of the rights and interests of the people against the onslaught of the reactionary propertied and privileged interests. The victory of this onslaught is not inevitable. The struggle is still in front. On the outcome of this struggle much depends.

R. P. D.

These "Notes of the Month" will be reprinted as

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Press Freedom in Wartime

A Symposium

(In view of the grave issues raised by the suppression of the "Daily Worker" and 'The Week," we have approached a number of representatives of democratic opinion for expressions of their viewpoint. While these contributors in several cases make clear their criticisms of the viewpoint of the "Daily Worker," they are united in protesting against the Government's action in suppressing this organ of working-class and democratic opinion.—Editorial Board.)

W. H. THOMPSON

The legal justification for the suppression of the *Daily Worker* is that Mr. Herbert Morrison as Home Secretary was satisfied that there was in the paper "a systematic publication of matter" which was "in his opinion calculated to foment opposition to the prosecution to a successful issue of the war." Mr. Morrison is under no obligation to defend his decision by giving reasons; there is no definition or description of what is meant by the prosecution of the war to a successful conclusion. Does it mean the defeat of Hitler; of Hitlerism; of the German working class? And the victory of whom?—the British governing class; the supporters of the Indian National Congress; or whom? I do not pretend to answer these questions, but the validity of such questions will at least be recognised by Mr. Morrison and some of his colleagues in the Government and the Labour Party (including myself) who themselves were asking similar questions in the last war—and were accordingly called traitors and defeatists and pro-Germans.

I only mention this to show what a vague and subjective test the "successful prosecution of the war" applies. I looked forward with interest to Mr. Morrison's defence in the House of Commons. Much of his speech was devoted to quotations and references from the speeches of some of his critics—in a manner which he has exploited so often and so brilliantly at Labour Party Conferences. These were directed to show either that Mr. Aneurin Bevan or Mr. Gallacher were undemocratic and consequently that toleration should only be extended to the tolerant. That may be a good debating point against those critics. It is, unfortunately for Mr. Morrison, not consistent either with his professions or with the principles of the Party of which he and I are members. We are expected to live up to our principles of liberty, democracy and free speech. It is by that yard-stick that Mr. Morrison must be judged, at any rate by his socialist friends.

I looked, however, for what his case really was. I found two points. The first was his reference to the exploitation of the working class who had had their houses bombed. The misery of this business needs no emphasis from me, but Mr. Morrison says about the *Daily Worker*: "They go to these brave people who are suffering domestic disaster and family misery, and they say: 'All of it was utterly unnecessary and need not be. It is because a cruel capitalist government want to make profit for the profiteers and to further imperialistic ends. All your suffering is without necessity and without purpose.'"

This complaint is apparently twofold: (1) that the *Daily Worker* said all this could have been avoided and that it is an imperialist war; and presumably (2) that it was helping Hitler. Does Mr. Morrison say that the *Daily Worker* is not to be allowed to say the former? What is the complaint? That the *Daily Worker* told the suffering working class that their suffering was un-

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necessary. Did not the I.L.P. and many other socialists say this in the last war? Has it not been a commonplace of socialist criticism that the suffering of the working class in peace *and* war is unnecessary? This is not sabotage. It is an expression of opinion. It may be right or wrong, popular or unpopular, but for a socialist Minister to suppress such propaganda under the guise of this regulation is an abrogation of all principles of socialism and liberty.

The whole of this point is so much akin to the subject of the alleged neglect of his department to provide proper protection for these unfortunate people that it looks suspiciously like the accused being made judge. It seems undesirable that the Minister responsible for air-raid precautions should have vested in him the power to suppress a paper which has violently criticised the exercise of these powers even if the suppression is supposed to be based on other grounds.

Mr. Morrison complains that " they were proceeding to undermine morale." It is surely elementary that every criticism of the Government may undermine morale and may be " helping Hitler "—if the unchallengeable decision is to rest with a member of that Government. The more justified the criticism may be, the more a government will want to stop it. May it not well be that this is the real ground for suppression? The *Daily Worker* was the only real opposition paper ; it expressed its opposition on A.R.P. ; on trade union policy ; on the treatment of evacuees ; on the food problems ; on the treatment of the rank and file in the Army, and on many other questions. It expressed its opposition violently, intemperately and, it may be, in poor taste ; it appealed primarily to the working class and it " kept on," and its most violent criticism was no doubt reserved for Mr. Morrison and his Labour colleagues in the Government. Far be it from me to pass any judgment upon the validity of its criticisms. That is not the point.

Mr. Morrison, before he was in office, criticised the granting of these wide powers to *any* Secretary of State. I would respectfully agree. The arguments which Mr. Morrison now uses were the very reasons advanced in the last war for the suppression of socialist and anti-war papers with some of which Mr. Morrison and many of his colleagues were no doubt in sympathy. They would have provided reasons for the suppression of the *Herald* during the last war and of the *British Worker* during the General Strike—no doubt at the behest of Mr. Churchill, the editor of its rival. They are the arguments which are always used by reactionary governments.

There are two other points. Mr. Morrison thinks that the House of Commons is the suitable tribunal to deal with this matter. That is an ironic claim. I have heard many claims to impartiality by and on behalf of different persons and tribunals. Nothing which I can say can rival the statement of Mr. Frank Owen, the editor of the *Evening Standard*, on this very regulation and its administration. "Why not leave it to the House of Commons? Yes, a House of Commons in which the Government commands the support of the three main parties, a fine court of law, wherein one litigant has eleven and a half of the jury as his pledged supporters! This is Fascism. The men who have locked up so many non-Fascists and even anti-Fascists may not recognise Fascism when they see it. But we do! We recognise it! "

Mr. Morrison took my breath away when he made this priceless claim: " I ask the House to accept my assurance that when I deal with these matters involving political parties, whether Communist or Fascist, I forget that I am a politician. I handle these matters judicially, and as impartially as I can."

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I observe that Mr. Morrison concluded by repeating the pledge given by the Prime Minister to Sir Archibald Sinclair that at the end of the war all our liberties will be restored to us. Mr. Morrison will remember somewhat similar assurances during the last war, and when I say that it sounds uncommonly like " pie in the sky," he will recognise the allusion, although it may be lost on some of his present comrades.

Mr. Morrison is an old hand at quotations from his opponents' previous expressions. He enjoys this method of controversy—and I have enjoyed and admired his efforts in the past. May I provide him with a quotation ?

> " The Fascist danger in this country does not come from the crude activities of Sir Oswald Mosley but from the clever propaganda which has been actively disseminated ever since the formation of the National Government in favour of what is called national unity. There has been a deliberate attempt made to suggest that after all there are no real political differences in this country and that everybody is in reality in agreement. The increasing danger of the international situation affords the opportunity for pressing this point. . . . The essentials of the Corporate State without any coloured shirts might be introduced in this country in a period of international tension."

This was written by another of Mr. Morrison's colleagues, Mr. C. R. Attlee.

One final point. Mr. Morrison may suggest that the contents of the *Daily Worker* are well known and that it has clearly and systematically published matter calculated to hinder a successful prosecution of the war. He might have given a few illustrations and then we could have tested what he had in mind. He said he did not need to make quotations from this newspaper as it would take too long to do so, and later he excused himself on the extraordinary ground that his critics in the House of Commons had not argued that the *Daily Worker* was innocent nor admitted that it was a fit subject for suppression. That seems to me like a lawyer's " get-out," due to the phraseology of the motion before the House, and particularly so in view of Mr. Gallacher's speech, and of the fact that he was not allowed to move his amendment. Surely the Home Secretary owes a duty to justify his conduct to the public as well as to the House of Commons. It shows astonishing and unusual reticence on the part of the Home Secretary and it becomes quite inexplicable when the only illustration of the type of thing he has in mind is what has been quoted about the air raids, particularly when he describes this as being " one of the most contemptible and dangerous things which the Communist Party has done." One wonders what the quotations were. There are many people who are quite as anxious to defeat Hitlerism as Mr. Morrison and who showed this long before many of his colleagues. The difficulty is that some people think that criticism of and opposition to *this* Government is an essential part of the real prosecution of the war against Fascism. That view may or may not be right, but it is a conceivable one and one which it is the duty, and ought to be the right, of its adherents to express.

The war against Fascism will be fought, and won, by free people who hate Fascism. It will not be fought and won by people who believe that weapons of suppression and repression are the necessary concomitants of victory.

G. BERNARD SHAW

The parliamentary protest against the suppression of the *Daily Worker* and *The Week* was badly mismanaged. It began with one of the loudest cries of stinking fish on record. The rest was the usual stale phrase-making about freedom of the press. Freedom of the press in England is like the Habeas

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Corpus Act, boasted of as a palladium of British liberty until it becomes inconvenient to the Government, and then immediately suspended. The House of Commons, having deliberately given to the War Cabinet all the powers it reviles the dictators for exercising, could hardly without stultifying itself round on it for doing likewise. Mr. Morrison easily wiped the floor with all that rubbish.

The second mistake was making too much of the *Daily Worker* and too little of *The Week*, which was far less vulnerable. Both papers were suppressed, not for saying things that all the other papers were saying as well, but for very wisely grasping the fact that a good understanding with Russia is all-important to us; for a war between the U.S.S.R. and the British Commonwealth would make every intelligent Briton a defeatist. Civilisation would be really at stake in it, with the Commonwealth on the wrong side. Professor Haldane, Mr. Ivor Montagu, Mr. Claude Cockburn, all persons of unquestionable mental capacity and knowledge of the modern world, knew this, and ran their papers accordingly. The War Cabinet, a coalition of Old School Ties and Trade Unionists, does not know it; it nurses a blind hatred of Russia because private property, with its sequel of idle parasitism and poverty, has been abolished there, all property being held subject to the public welfare, whilst trade unionism, though enormously more general and powerful than in England or America, is part of the state machinery and admits of no dictatorship so absolute as that of an English trade union secretary. Here, then, was the real and overwhelming case for Mr. Haldane and Mr. Cockburn. It was simply not mentioned in the House; and the War Cabinet had the debate all its own way.

It would have been far more sensible to suppress the *Times* and all the other papers which have for years carried on, and are still carrying on, a campaign of insult, calumny, and clamour for a capitalist united front against Bolshevism. But that is not how Adult Suffrage works. We should be only too thankful that Messrs. Haldane, Montagu and Cockburn have not been shot, as they would be if the War Cabinet could possibly be as stupid and ignorant in high politics as the majority of its constituents.

H. G. WELLS

I think that the publication of matter likely to be of use to the enemy, either by giving information or undermining morale, could be and should be controllable at the place and time of the attempt. It should be dealt with as a specific offence. I consider the complete suppression of any periodical expressing any point of view however uncongenial to me is altogether undesirable. The *Daily Worker* and *The Week* have been first attacked because they are provocative in manner and represent a minority point of view, but manifestly, so long as they do not offend in the particular matters I have stated, the groups they represent are as much entitled to the enjoyment of free speech and criticism as any others. Their case is obviously only the opening one in a campaign of unlimited press intimidation.

SIR RICHARD ACLAND, M.P.

If I am to comment on the suppression of the *Daily Worker* and *The Week* you must allow me to state my views on the total position.

I think the *Daily Worker* criticism of Government failures on the Home Front were, in general, extremely valuable. (I do not necessarily endorse all in detail.) But I think the *Daily Worker* attitude to the war was wrong, and was based on a fundamentally wrong analysis of the total world situation. I am not 100

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per cent. certain that regulations 2C and 94A were the best that could have been devised to protect a nation which overwhelmingly desires to go on with a war from those who would reduce its will to resist, but these regulations had been fully discussed with members of the House of Commons whose zeal for individual liberty is unquestionable, and they had not challenged these regulations. Therefore these regulations must be accepted. I am convinced myself that if the Home Secretary had taken individuals connected with the *Daily Worker* to court under these regulations they would have been convicted, not because our courts are corrupt, but because, in my view, the *Daily Worker* had offended against these regulations.

But it was wholly improper for the Home Secretary to proceed against the *Daily Worker* and *The Week* under 2D and 94B, which give the accused no chance of stating a case. That this has been done means that without the suppression of one more newspaper, every editor is under the menace of secret " warnings " directed to the proprietors of his paper. It has often been said that it is important not only that justice should be done, but that it should seem to be done. It is equally important not merely that press criticism should be free from threat, but that it should be known to be free. This cannot now be the case since the *Daily Worker* episode.

In addition, this episode makes it far harder for me to convince those tempted to accept the Communist case that it is in fact old-fashioned and wrong.

Furthermore, it drives discontent underground, where it is far more dangerous than on the surface.

These things represent the real mischief of the Government's action.

SIR HUGH ROBERTON

We hear much of this " glorious new world " for which we are fighting. I am all for a glorious new world, a world in which the main pursuit of man will not be personal profit but public weal, a world in which no section of the public will be outcast, and haunted, as they are to-day, from the cradle to the grave; a world in which poverty and unemployment will be regarded as very nasty blots on our social escutcheon; a world in which the hoarders and monopolists will be saved against themselves and their inordinate vanity by expropriation; a world in which caste-rule (which cannot be other than tyranny) will have disappeared; a world in which war (international brawling) will be as taboo as is street brawling to-day; a world in which the spirit of man will, at last, be free to soar.

I look expectantly for signs of this glorious new world, and I am disappointed. Talk of it there is, but we had so much talk in 1914-18 that old hands like myself begin to be a little wary.

And now comes news of the suppression of the *Daily Worker*. Suppression! A dangerous road, my good friends!

Somehow I cannot bring myself to regard this particular case as a portent of the glorious new world. It seems to me more like a sign that the keepers of the rotten old world are determined to hold fast to that which they possess, and are prepared to use all the old machinery that their prototypes employed long ago against Thomas Paine and his *Rights of Man*.

Now, I do not always find myself in agreement with the *Daily Worker*, although it more often reflects my point of view than, say, the London *Times* or the *Daily Mail*. But why suppress minority opinion at all? The minority was right in the last war. The minority was right in the Boer War. The

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minority must, methinks, be right in every war, since war itself is madness. Thus do we always see, when sanity returns, how foolish we have been. We lick our sores, but we never learn. We think we have learned when we set to and prepare another generation for the shambles.

Well, suppression is one of the bitter fruits of war. It is born of intolerance, as intolerance is born of fear. It is the antithesis of liberty. Wherefore, every liberty-loving citizen should be up and doing in defence of the *Daily Worker's* right to expression. And if this right is to be challenged by the powers that be, then that challenge should be made in open court. To contend otherwise is to admit that the Nazi method is right. I am sure it is wrong.

LORD PONSONBY

Morrison's decision with regard to the *Daily Worker* is only the first step in the gradual suppression of all criticism of the Government.

All who value the maintenance of civil liberties will support the representatives of the *Daily Worker* in their protest.

If the Government are afraid of Communist propaganda they should surely know that by driving it underground they will certainly strengthen it and draw to its support many who are not Communists.

It is interesting to note with what astuteness the onus for taking this objectionable step had been placed by the Tories on members of the Labour Party.

H. W. NEVINSON, *Hon. LL.D., D.Litt.*

As an old war correspondent, I have been largely occupied in following the course of the war, and I have not studied the policy of the *Labour Monthly* or of the *Daily Worker*.

If the policy of both or either is in favour of "Revolutionary Defeatism," as has been represented by the Government authorities and many papers, I heartily disagree with it, and I do not believe it would be supported by any but a very small minority of the British people. As a nation I am convinced we have no wish to fall under the control of Nazism as other fine and gallant peoples have fallen. I think we shall not submit to it even with the object of creating a further revolution in its place.

But as a journalist of fifty years' standing I much regret the suppression of the *Daily Worker* by summary action under a regulation which was agreed to only under a pledge that it would not be used except in case of invasion.

The Government have broken their promise and dangerously infringed upon the Freedom of the Press, which is one of the liberties we are proud to uphold.

L. C. WHITE

(*Civil Service Clerical Association*).

I disagree with the policy of the Home Secretary, as I disagree with the policy of the *Daily Worker*.

My view about the war is much the same as the view expounded by the *Daily Worker* before it turned that complete somersault which, for a time, threw its loyal readers into a state of complete confusion, and before Mr. Harry Pollitt repudiated his own pamphlet on the need for destroying Fascism. I remained, however, a fairly regular reader of the *Daily Worker*, although I was consistently unimpressed by much of what it published. It surprises me

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that a government, which has in its possession or to some extent within its control, every propaganda and publicity medium, should have thought it necessary or desirable to order suppression. Its action has given to the *Worker* a standing and an importance it would not have achieved had it been left alone. Lovers of freedom must examine every act of restriction perpetrated by the Government, not merely in relation to the immediate consequences, but with the fear that it may prove another step taken towards the totalitarian concept that the state can do no wrong. Thus the suppression of the *Daily Worker* has given to those responsible for the conduct of that paper an opportunity of rallying behind themselves freedom-loving forces whose views about the contents of the *Daily Worker* may be the same as those of the Home Secretary.

If, despite the obvious disadvantages of suppression, the Government insisted upon going on, it could not have chosen less desirable procedure or a more unsuitable agent through which to work. I have no wish to suggest that Mr. Herbert Morrison's well-known and cogently expressed opposition to the Communists influenced his decision in this matter, but he and the Government must have known how readily his action would lend itself to misconception and misrepresentation. For this reason alone it would have been better that those responsible for the policy of the *Daily Worker* should have been brought before the courts and openly tried on any charges the Government might wish to bring.

Apart from Mr. Morrison's personal position, there is the unsatisfactory position which any Home Secretary must occupy when dealing with a newspaper which is critical of the administration of his department. In its criticisms of the Government's air-raid precautions policy the *Daily Worker* got nearer home than in anything else it published. A good deal of what it had to say about Home Office failure was well justified and needed to be said. I know that officials who are highly placed and have the ear of the Minister resent criticism from anybody about anything, and it is not too easy to dismiss the suggestion that this resentment of criticism may have had something to do with any advice given to the Minister about what should be done to the *Daily Worker*.

The reason given by Mr. Morrison for not going to the courts, when the matter was debated in the House of Commons, was singularly unconvincing. The excuse that the Law's delays were inescapable and the matter urgent might carry conviction if the Home Office had wakened on Wednesday morning to its first realisation that the *Daily Worker* was so destructive of the national will to win the war that it must never appear again. The fact is that the *Daily Worker* was officially warned a long time ago. For months it has pursued the course to which the Home Secretary takes exception, and for months it has been open to him or to his predecessor to set the necessary legal machinery in motion in order to get a verdict from the court.

I was a member of a deputation which waited on the present Minister of Information to urge, *inter alia*, the withdrawal of Regulation 2D. At that time apprehensions about how this regulation might operate were no more than apprehensions. To-day they have become realities. I derive no comfort from the fact that the power of suppression has been used to put out of business two publications with whose policy I disagree. Even were I foolish enough to believe that my own views would always coincide with those of the Home Secretary and that the instrument of suppression would only be used against my opponents, I would still hold that the Government has made a grave mistake in its handling of this matter. Punishment without trial is becoming far too common these days. In the Civil Service we have had many instances of persons being dismissed without being told of the information laid against them, the source of that information, and without being given any opportunity

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of stating their defence. The urgency of war conditions does not justify procedure of this sort, whether persons or publications are involved. If the motive for suppression is justified, there is everything to be gained and nothing to be lost by leaving the decision to the courts, in circumstances in which a specific charge can be levelled, a defence offered and a decision taken, unaffected, it is to be hoped, either by political prejudice or by a desire to muzzle criticism which is not necessarily unfounded because it is resented.

S. O. DAVIES, M.P.

My agreement or disagreement with the war policy of the *Daily Worker* is as immaterial as my reactions to the war policy of the big imperialistic daily newspapers. I listened anxiously to Mr. Herbert Morrison's speech in the House of Commons. With others I waited in vain for any evidence he could submit in justification of his unprecedented action. Apparently he seemed content with treating the House of Commons with contempt, and in exploiting its prejudices—all to the accompaniment of a barrage of cheap and reckless vituperation. Frankly, I must confess that I have never heard such an amazingly irresponsible statement made by any Minister of the Crown on a matter of such grave and vital importance. The Home Secretary in the short space of about 45 minutes, in a speech he will never live down, completely and devastatingly gave the lie to all the protestations of the Government that this is a war for freedom and democracy.

A subsequent perusal of Hansard has not allayed my misgivings and alarm. I have honestly sought for some concrete reasons, or some arguable grounds, that might have remotely justified this extraordinarily dangerous and unique action on the part of a Labour Home Secretary. In this I have failed, and have been forced to the following conclusions :—

(1) That the suppression of the *Daily Worker* is a deliberate suppression of opinion, the freedom of thought and its expression.

(2) The Home Secretary's admission that the *Daily Worker* had done no harm, and that he suppressed it in case it might do harm, revealed an attitude far more akin to Fascism than to Democracy.

(3) His refusal to proceed against the paper under 2C instead of 2D was obviously an act of pure malice. To plead, on the one hand, that the procedure under the former was too slow and, on the other hand, to admit that his office had carefully watched the *Worker* during the last 17 months, must be accepted as providing no justification for betraying the assurances of his predecessor at the Home Office.

(4) Thanks to the Home Secretary's action, I, and many others, find it impossible to dissociate the suppression of the *Daily Worker* from the imposition of industrial conscription and the releasing of certain Fascists from prison. These three events were so timed as to create the widespread conviction that they were closely inter-related.

(5) Like the capitalist press I am compelled to accept the logic of this suppression of unpopular views. Mr. Morrison had not even delivered his speech in the Commons before the press had anticipated his next step. Headlines such as " Police to act against Red Agitators " appeared ; a slogan wide enough to rope in every honest trade unionist, and every enthusiast in the Labour movement.

(6) This act is tragically reminiscent of the destruction of liberty in Germany, Italy and France. It therefore behoves us, at whatever personal cost, to guard our hard-earned liberties with the unshaken conviction that a war that is made the excuse to rob us of any of those liberties cannot be a war for freedom and democracy.

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THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY

" Your freedom is in danger ; defend it with all your might."

Government Posters.

This, we are told, is a war for liberty and freedom. It is only Fascism that suppresses public opinion and regiments and dragoons the minds of men.

This attack upon the *Daily Worker* and *The Week* is no new thing. It is only a more subtle and insidious method of what Duff Cooper attempted last year with his " silent column," his prosecutions, his attempted suppression of the press, for which he sought to substitute the *British Gazette*. It is the first step towards Fascism. Will it be the last ?

The signs are ominous. The *Daily Mirror* and the *Sunday Pictorial* have already been warned for daring to demand that Chamberlain and Halifax should go. When the time is ripe, and unless we call a halt, other papers will follow the *Daily Worker*.

There was no case for suppression. If the *Daily Worker* was guilty of crime it could have been brought within the process of the law. The Government possesses ample powers for any prosecution. Why were they not used ? Of what was the Government afraid ? Did they fear that the *Daily Worker* might be acquitted ?

This reversion to executive action, instead of legal process, is a reversion to Star Chamber methods, which involved a fierce fight before their defeat 300 years ago. The fight is on again.

But let us probe deeper. Of what were the Government really afraid ? That the *Daily Worker* did not tell the truth or only told it partially ? If that were so they had no cause to fear, since in a free country lies cannot win : they will in fact defeat the end they serve. Only the truth can make men free ; falsehood is powerless against the truth. The Government has channels to counter any lie.

Quite the reverse. The Government were obviously afraid of certain truths being told and chose skilfully the moment of suppression to prevent it. It would hide from the public eye the truth of the success of the People's Convention, or the truth of the many removable hardships which the common people suffer in the conduct of the war. In particular it would remove any channel for expressing the uneasiness felt at Bevin's measures for the conscription of Labour.

These, then, are some of the obvious reasons why the *Daily Worker* has been suppressed at this particular time. There are, on the other hand, very obvious and pressing reasons why it should be released again.

Our world is in the shock of change. A new world is about to be born. Chaos and upheaval threaten society. If ever the time was opportune to discuss the necessary changes and ease the way to a new order of life, that time is now. All voices must be heard. To fetter free thought is to invite disaster. It is to ask for change by violence instead of by peaceful progression which will benefit the individual and not harm the community.

How apposite at times like these are the words of the great champions of freedom, to which in gentler days we have paid lip homage. Now they come like the flash of a sword to sever the true lovers of freedom from the false. Let these mighty words of Wendell Phillips summon all lovers of liberty to renewed and vigorous action : " If there is anything that cannot bear free thought, let it crack. Nothing but Freedom, Justice and Truth is of any permanent advantage to the mass of mankind. To these society, life itself, is always tending. ' The right to think, to know, to utter,' as John Milton said, ' is the dearest of all liberties.' Without this right there can be no liberty to any people ; with it there can be no slavery."

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RONALD KIDD

A FREE PRESS, like a free Parliament, is the very foundation stone of democratic liberty. Of this liberty the basic elements are freedom of expression and freedom of criticism without which our democratic system in this country would very quickly suffer the same eclipse as that of France. In that country—according to Mr. Lloyd George and the correspondents of the *Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, etc.—censorship and suppression of news was one of the chief means by which the French people were prevented from knowing that Fascist intrigues were working to destroy the French Republic.

In regard to the suppression of the *Daily Worker*, let me make my personal position in this matter quite clear. I can speak with complete independence. I am not, and never have been, a Communist. Indeed, I have never belonged to a political party in my life. What I have to say, therefore, I can say with the more emphasis and impartiality because personally I have strongly disagreed with the policy of the *Daily Worker* in regard to the war. I want to see this war prosecuted to a successful issue against Nazism and Fascism. I want to see it prosecuted with the utmost vigour and by every legitimate means—but by no means all the Government's methods and measures are either vigorous or legitimate. Vast numbers of the Government's supporters have undergone a magic conversion to "Democracy." Some of them have in the past evinced an extreme dislike of everything that is denoted by that word. Many of them were active in assisting the destruction of democracy in Spain; others (both inside and outside Parliament) were honoured guests of Ribbentrop at Carlton House Terrace; others have a long history of friendship and collaboration with the Fascist traitors of France, such as Laval.

It will be remembered that on May 9, 1940, certain new and drastic Defence Regulations were introduced conferring on the Home Secretary power:—

(*a*) to issue a "warning" if he personally disapproved of propaganda that was being carried on;

(*b*) to prosecute the offenders in the Courts of Law if they neglected to observe his warning;

(*c*) if a conviction were obtained, to suppress any printing presses which had been used to print the offending propaganda.

That Regulation (No. 2C) had been drawn up by the then Home Secretary, Sir John Anderson, in consultation with members of the leading political parties, but nevertheless it was subjected to very severe criticism as showing a tendency towards interference with possibly legitimate anti-Government criticism.

This procedure, necessitating recourse to the Courts, by no means pleased Sir John Anderson, and we find that only twenty days later—on May 29—he introduced a still more drastic Regulation without any consultation whatsoever with the political parties. This was Regulation 2D under which he was relieved of the necessity to prosecute, and could suppress any newspaper by his own arbitrary act. There was no means of challenging his action in the Courts; he was not even required to show any good reason for the suppression; no warning need have been previously issued and there was no redress against this Nazi-like decree. As there was no trial there could obviously be no appeal. The Home Secretary's power was absolute.

Strong protests from all sides of the House were voiced in Parliament when Regulation 2D was promulgated. The motion of a Labour member for the annulment of this new Regulation was lost by only 38 votes, and the Home Secretary came near to defeat on that occasion. Anderson sought to excuse the substitution of autocratic suppression for legal process by telling

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Parliament that in his view, in case of invasion, the procedure under 2C might prove too dilatory. He went on to assure the House that this new procedure (about which they had not previously been consulted) was only for use in case of the direst necessity such as actual physical invasion of these shores. The House was not satisfied, but Anderson just scraped through on this pledge—a pledge which, I regret to say, was subsequently broken by his successor, Mr. Morrison, shortly afterwards.

On an earlier occasion last year, Anderson threatened the *Daily Worker* with his severe displeasure. Many people have mistakenly assumed that this was a " warning " under Regulation 2C. In fact, it was not a statutory warning under that Regulation at all; it was a vague threat which made no specific reference to any alleged defence. When he was challenged to name the published matter which he regarded as objectionable, he refused or was unable to do so.

Having dissented so often and so strongly from views expressed in the *Daily Worker*, I feel it my duty to point out that the strongest criticism in that newspaper has been directed against the conduct of Mr. Morrison's department in regard to air-raid shelters, imprisonment without trial, the administration of the Defence Regulations and other matters relating to home security. As Mr. Morrison's dislike of Communists has always been extremely bitter, it seems to me deeply regrettable—even politically disreputable—that he should have lent any support to the suspicion that he was seeking to get his own back by setting aside the jurisdiction of the Courts and by arbitrarily suppressing the newspaper of the political party with which he is at special enmity.

It has been repeatedly hinted in Parliament and in the Press that the *Daily Worker* had committed such grave offences against the security of the State that its suppression, by whatever means, was justified. Mr. Morrison, however, gave the lie to these vague suggestions, for he categorically stated in the House that the suppression of this paper was a preventive action lest it should *at some future time* interfere with the morale of the nation and the successful conduct of the war. Thus Mr. Morrison disposed once and for all of the suggestion that the supposedly subversive activities of this newspaper had been a menace to the nation.

Not only the civil liberties of a minority political party are at stake. Readers of the *Daily Worker* numbered many more than the adherents of the political party of which it was the organ. They, too, have been disenfranchised of their right to consider its opinions and news; and since the Paper Limitation Order prevents the starting of any new paper, the opinions of this section of the population are permanently without a channel of expression.

It is alarming in the highest degree to find that persons who make profession of their democratic faith are now prepared to condone this Nazi-like procedure against a newspaper of which they disapprove. History indeed repeats itself—and with the same old excuse—of State necessity.

1940 BOUND VOLUMES

The whole of our supplies of bound volumes of 1940 LABOUR MONTHLY have been exhausted. We are unable to put in hand a further supply unless we can obtain copies of January and October, 1940, issues. If any readers can spare their copies we shall be very glad indeed to buy them back, and will then be in a position to take further orders for Bound Volumes.

We can still accept orders for binding full sets of loose copies. Owing to the increased costs, the price will be 5/-, postage 7d.

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The Future of the Labour Party

I—By JUSTIN LEWIS
(*County Councillor for Glamorgan*)
and
MABEL LEWIS, J.P.
(*Chairman of Mountain Ash U.D.C.*)

IF WE CARE to remember or to read, we can all gain a great deal from the experiences of the last war, 1914-1918.

Mr. Lloyd George, one of the prime movers of that period, has an illuminating account in his memoirs "*of the horrid and squalid aspects of war . . . its muddles*; *its futilities*; *its chanciness*; *its precariousness*; *its wastefulness of the lives, the treasure and the virtues of mankind—all that demonstrates the stupidity . . . how the incredible heroism of the common men was being squandered to repair the incompetence of the trained inexperts. . . .*" But he also has some important things to say *re* Labour's part in the Great War.

He describes how before the war there had been developing a militant rank-and-file movement keenly critical of the policy and methods of the official leaders and that this movement was gaining steadily in strength when "happily (for the ruling class) the war brought about a prompt and hearty truce between the warring interests."

Mr. Lloyd George goes on to say that the Trade Union leaders proclaimed an industrial peace for the duration of the war, and that wages, hours, trade union customs and regulations went by the board.

With regard to Labour's participation in the Government, the wily Prime Minister saw that it was a matter of the first national importance to bring the Labour Party into active co-operation with the Government. "Had Labour been hostile," he says, "we could not have carried on."

But to achieve this even Mr. Lloyd George did not find an easy matter, for we are told that he—the Prime Minister—was "subjected to a good deal of examination and cross-examination." The Labour Party were by no means completely united, and many pointed questions were put concerning industrial conscription, the war aims and peace aims of the Government of the day.

How much easier was it to get Labour's participation in the Government for this war! The Labour Leaders were impatiently waiting for the call—even if it came from the Men of Munich!

These "ambitious statesmen," as the founder of the Labour Party, Keir Hardie, would have described them, rushed in and saved the Munichеers from a political death-blow, which the people of this country were already ripe to administer.

The rank and file of the Labour Movement were bewildered and almost stunned by this action on the part of their professed Socialist leaders. Even the least politically enlightened member of the Party thought that Labour would have demanded *terms* before pledging the whole movement to support the out-dated but well-regimented Tory majority at Westminster.

To meet the wishes of the active rank and file of the movement, Labour should have demanded :—

(1) The men of Munich must go.

(2) A constructive policy on the Home Front. Real equality of sacrifice. Conscription of property as well as lives. Better standards of allowances for men in the Forces and of their dependants. Nationalisation of all the essential services, etc.

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(3) Freedom for India and the Colonies and Co-operation with the U.S.S.R.

The failure of the leadership to lay down terms is rightly considered to be a major blunder. Here was a real test for enlightened and sincere leadership. It failed miserably. In this respect Labour leadership is true to its historic role. It failed in the last war, in the Labour Government of 1924, in the General Strike of 1926, again in the second Labour Government of 1928. Its support of " non-intervention," which was really a stranglehold on Republican Spain, is all too tragically fresh in the memories of all progressive peoples.

With such a record, small wonder is it that there is growing within the Labour movement a cynical distrust of the leadership and a general apathy which is rapidly undermining whatever influence the Labour Party might have had with the masses of this country.

There is no doubt that the political side of the Labour Movement generally is in rapid decline.

Take the question of membership. After making due allowances for members who are engaged in the various forms of National Service and who therefore may be regarded as a temporary loss to the Party, the fact remains that active membership of the Labour Party has slumped enormously since Labour has embarked on the " political truce."

This reactionary tactic has knocked the life out of the Labour Party rank and file. What were once Labour strongholds are now mere shadows of their former selves. There is stagnation and death in the wards and constituencies of even the industrial areas of the country.

The balance sheet submitted to the Bournemouth Conference showed an alarming decrease in revenue from Local Parties. With the continuation of the " truce " the slump in revenue will become more and more marked.

The sales of literature—a good criterion of Party life and activity—are also slumping badly, and at the rate of over £1,200 a year. The written word is just as unwelcome as the spoken.

In membership and finance, therefore, there is a general tendency downwards.

What does this mean ? It means that only the strength of the Trade Unions can save the Labour Party. More and more will the Trade Unions have to subsidise Labour Party funds. This means in effect that the direction of Labour Party policy is to pass into the hands of the Trade Unions.

And it is at this point that it is absolutely essential that the active practical Socialist trades unionist should realise the part he can play.

He should be conscious of the fact that within recent years the policy of centralisation in trades unionism has been growing apace. There has been a rapid growth of bureaucracy or " rule of officials " in the unions and the Labour Movement generally and a marked tendency to stifle rank-and-file opinion. Everything must follow the official pattern.

The bloc vote, wielded by officials of trade unions who are completely out of touch with rank-and-file sentiments and who are completely reactionary in character, is used to defeat even the least radical suggestions pointing the way forward.

What is the active trades unionist to do under these circumstances ? His job is clearly to continue his work in the trades union to bring about a curtailment of the power wielded by reactionary leaders. He must not at any cost leave his organisation. This is a policy of defeatism and despair. He must stick with his fellow-workers and rescue the movement from the evil effects of false leadership.

" The soldiers are never weak if the Generals are strong ! " This is the crux of the situation ! Labour " Generals " have immobilised the army of Labour. It is our job to see to the remobilisation of Labour.

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How can this be done ? Look at the eight points of the People's Convention Movement ! All these have a direct bearing upon the lives of the people of this country. Active men and women of the Labour movement can enthuse a new life into the movement with such a programme.

The task is admittedly made harder by the suppression of the *Daily Worker*, but even this in itself can be made the medium of attack upon the forces of Labour reaction. Trades Councils, Labour Parties, etc., are passing resolutions of protest against Morrison, who did not hesitate to use a weapon that even Sir John Anderson dared not use.

There is a growing opposition also to the use of the weapon of expulsions now being adopted by the Central Bureaucracy of Transport House. The rank and file are not going to tolerate a policy which has the effect of divorcing its most active and militant members from the main body of the movement.

Trust the rank and file of the Labour Movement. It is sound. It can be united behind a real policy of protection of the people, for the prospect of a decent standard of living and for a people's peace. The official leadership, so loyally co-operating with the Tory Party, *will* be discredited. The spirit of disillusionment now prevalent in the Labour Movement will give way to an independent fighting spirit—the spirit of the great People's Convention in London.

In the words of William Morris :—

What is this the sound and rumour ?
What is this that all men hear ?
The People marching on !

II—By COUNCILLOR J. CRAIG WALKER

PROFESSOR HAROLD LASKI, in his Pelican booklet entitled " Where Do We Go From Here ? " fails most lamentably in his self-imposed task because he has not the courage to face up to the logic of his own reasoning.

Some of the leaders of the Labour Party have a wide knowledge of working-class conditions and of the hopes and desires of the workers ; they understand something of the principles of Socialism and sincerely desire to see them applied. They know something of the vast economic changes necessary for the establishment of a Socialist Commonwealth and of the tremendous opposition to be expected from the vested interests, but they have neither the confidence in themselves nor in the mass support of the workers which would enable them to make use of the opportunities arising out of a war situation or during any other period of national crisis. This lack of faith and courage in its turn tends to undermine the confidence of the workers also, and indecision and chaos are the inevitable outcome.

Mr. Arthur Greenwood stated with the utmost sincerity that the " Government cannot last a single day without the support of Labour," but he will continue to co-operate with it and the traditional and ruthless enemies of the people rather than face the risks and responsibilities of taking over the government in the interests of the workers, even if such co-operation means five millions of unemployed at the end of the war.

Professor Laski, in his booklet " Where Do We Go From Here ? " states :—

> ". . . when the Norwegian defeat came it was the vividness of the danger which compelled the Labour Party to join forces with Mr. Churchill in a new national Government ; to have refused would have been to invite Party suicide and national defeat."

Incidentally the Labour Party is committing suicide by co-operation with its enemies.

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Both gentlemen may believe what they say, but both statements imply a lack of faith in the principles which each has so long advocated, and of the ability of the Labour Party under its present leadership to do the job it was primarily organised to do.

The purpose of this article is to try to point out a way whereby we can overcome the difficulties now confronting us in the industrial and political fields. It is a task at once supremely urgent and important.

As a Trade Unionist of forty years' standing I have seen the workers' movement grow from strength to strength; I have felt it weaken; I have known it to be betrayed; but I have never lost hope. Through all its vicissitudes the heart of Labour has been sound, its head "bloody but unbowed." But the blows it has had, the buffetings it has survived, and the betrayals it has suffered have often made it confused and not at all clear as to the needs of any particular situation.

A contributory cause of the confusion is to be found in the number of doctrinaires who have formed caves and groups within the movement which, in addition to disintegrating and dissipating the fighting strength of the workers, has repelled many members of other classes who, either from sympathetic or theoretic motives, have become interested in the working-class movement.

This is not to say that discussion as to ways and means is not desirable. On the contrary it is absolutely essential. It is important, however, to remember that discussing the interpretation of the dicta, even of famous men, is not the sole nor the best way of achieving Socialism, and that sometimes the opportunity to take control may be missed in the heat and haze of argument. Anything which interferes with the development of a mass movement is very much to be deprecated. Anything which assists, develops and co-ordinates mass movement is to be welcomed. These are truisms which require to be stated and re-stated in order that they may be fully appreciated.

In normal times the chief grievances of the workers centre around wage and working conditions; cost of living, housing and that terrible phantom which haunts all wage-earners—unemployment and its consequent insecurity. Under war-time conditions, questions relative to the pay and conditions of the armed forces of the Crown, evacuation, billeting, pensions, dependants' allowances and protection from attack from the air, all assume a tremendous importance, and anything that appears likely to reduce the hardships due to them is assured at once of sympathetic attention.

To remedy or to remove grievances is the first thing to do, not only by the mere social reformer, but by the class-conscious militant. It is the first step on the road to the classless state. The demand that grievances should be remedied is what the capitalist press makes the basis of its charge against the Communists when it accuses them of exploiting grievances. A charge to be proud of! The Trade Union and Socialist movement has been built up by exploiting grievances. It is the chief reason for its existence.

It is because the present leadership is showing so little sympathetic appreciation of legitimate complaints that it has become so suspect. It is because it has allied itself with the financial and employing class that demands are being made for it to be replaced by a leadership more in sympathy with the desires of the workers.

How is that replacement to be made? That is the question. It cannot be brought about by the wishful thinking of the Laskis and Greenwoods. Can it be brought about by constitutional means? Laski hopes that it can. But he recognises that if the revolution has to be brought about by peaceful means it will mean the voluntary sacrifice by the privileged class of all their privileges and vested interests. He doubts also the capacity of the privileged class to

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rise to such heights of generosity. He warns and cajoles and sometimes comes near to threatening members of the capitalist class of what is likely to come to them in the event of their remaining true to their class, but he never faces up to the only conclusion his reasoning leads to, namely, that the forceful expropriation of the exploiters is the only possible way to achieve the Socialist state. That is why I said earlier in this article that he fails lamentably to point a way out.

There are only two ways. One is that by which by ordinary Parliamentary methods legislation may be passed which grants the workers their demands. In the present circumstances with the Tory Party in control one may as well wish for the moon. The personnel of Parliament must be changed and changed quickly if anything of this nature is to be done.

This is where the People's Convention can be of immense value. In its programme of eight points it does really get down to fundamentals, and the response to its earlier proposals has been most heartening and encouraging. If this early promise can be maintained and sufficient drive put into the agitation to get the demands considered it may be possible to force an end to the party truce and electoral truce.

This can only be done by concentrated effort, both in an attempt to reach the workers in the shops and factories and the women in their homes. This latter is most important, for the women are in some respects much more closely concerned with the matters referred to earlier than are the men. Wages, housing, dependants' allowances, unemployment, etc., are to them of very great moment, and their interest should be gained and maintained by a proper approach. Now that the *Daily Worker* has been murdered and its most valuable aid lost to us, more strenuous efforts must be made to get the message of the Convention over to the people whom it is intended to serve.

The Convention programme contains something of value for all grades of workers whether by hand or brain, and has an appeal also for that vast mass of unattached opinion which values the principles of individual freedom, right of assembly and freedom of speech. In times of crisis public opinion tends to gather round those sections that are most simple and direct in their appeal and which give evidence of a real and sincere determination to fight for their rights.

This has its lesson for us. We must simplify as much as possible. We must be direct and, above all, we must sincerely mean business. It is possible by these means so to revitalise the Trade Union and Labour Party branches, the Co-operative Guilds, etc., that the present leadership can be forced to abdicate or make some effort in the direction of satisfying the Convention's demands. In all circumstances one thing may be relied upon, and that is that resistance of every kind—scrupulous and unscrupulous ; overt and covert ; ruthless and determined—will be encountered from the possessing class. What will be conceded will only be as Burke put it, " in order to preserve," or because of the superior force of the workers. There will be no quarter.

If the foregoing methods fail, there are then only two alternatives before us : either the acceptance of conditions imposed upon us by British or German Fascists or the second way referred to above, *i.e.*, the taking of control by other than Parliamentary action. In this connection I fully agree with Laski that unless " we can adapt our society peacefully to the demands of the future . . . the objective historical circumstances in which we live make violent readjustment certain." Unlike him, however, knowing the nature of the capitalist beast, I do not appeal to its democratic nature, because such an appeal can in no wise be successful, and I prefer therefore to keep my powder dry and organise for the time when the real struggle will come.

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The Workers and the British Totalitarians

BY J. R. CAMPBELL

IT IS PLAIN from the speeches of the Minister of Labour, Mr. Ernest Bevin, from the debates in the House of Commons, and from an ever-growing multitude of articles in the financial press, that we are on the eve of big changes in the status of labour in industry. What is the aim of these changes? How will they affect the average man and woman?

The background against which these changes are taking place is now sufficiently familiar to everyone. In the months before Hitler overran Europe, we had inflicted upon us *ad nauseam* statistics which demonstrated the enormous economic superiority of the then allies, France and Britain, over Nazi Germany. In these statistics we were supposed to find an "assurance of victory." The military operation in Europe in the summer of 1940 completely changed this picture to the advantage of Nazi Germany. There is no British Empire economic superiority over Nazi Germany now; and in relation to White man power the Axis inferiority is overwhelming. With regard to economic power, a leading authority has recently declared: "If our average standard of living during the war remains half as high again as the Germans' we shall have economic resources available for war of nearly 26,000 million dollars as against the Germans' 27,500 million dollars." (*Wages and Means of War*, p. 22.)

The figures of economic power are not, from the British point of view, as good as they seem at first sight. For it is not potential power for war purposes that counts, but actual economic power organised on a war footing, and it is felt that in the latter respect Nazi Imperialism is still far ahead of British Imperialism.

> "At this late stage of the war—and I emphasise this—it seems we are content with an expenditure of £1,000 million less than the enemy regards as the minimum." (Mr. Emmanuel Shinwell, House of Commons, November 27, 1940.)

Of course, British imperialism is relying on American imperialism to decisively tip the balance in its favour. But if the full war potentialities of British industry are not yet developed, that applies with still greater force to the industry of the U.S.A. British imperialism has to make a powerful effort to get on to the most complete war footing on the basis of its own resources. And it can, on the basis of monopoly capitalism, only build up its war industry to the required level by drastically scaling down its civilian industry or, to put it in another way, it can only supply the needs of the war by refraining from satisfying the needs of its civilian population to anything like the extent that they were satisfied with in the last year of peace.

Mr. R. W. B. Clarke calculated even before the fall of France that to attain the full war effort civilian consumption in Great Britain would have to be cut by 40 per cent. as a whole, while that of wage earners earning below £5 per week must be cut by at least 25 per cent. Mr. Geoffrey Crowther, the editor of the *Economist*, has defined the aim of a war economy as follows:—

> "To win the war we must devote more resources to it than the enemy, and since he will devote as many as he can, we must put every man and every machine that can possibly be spared to the purpose of war. To make this possible, we must restrict our consumption to the minimum. . . . The demands of war are so unlimited that even with production increased to the maximum and consumption cut to the minimum, there will still be a shortage of almost everything." (*Ways and Means of War*, pages 7 and 8.)

We will not pause to moralise on the close resemblance between this aim and that of the Nazi war economy, but will hurry on to consider what are the methods of achieving this aim, how much has been achieved already, and what further steps the Government are contemplating.

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The Oligarchy and the Union Bureaucracy

To answer these questions we must first examine the relations which have developed in the course of this war between the monopolist oligarchy which rules Britain and the reformist Labour leaders whose co-operation is necessary to enable the oligarchy to rule smoothly and effectively on the basis of the present parliamentary system. As is well known, the oligarchy did not, as in 1914, issue the slogan of business as usual, but passed over to a fairly comprehensive system of State control of industry and trade right from the commencement of the war. This did not mean, of course, that the oligarchy accepted dictation from State bureaucrats as to how industry should be run. On the contrary, it transferred its most trusted executives from the Boards of Directors of private concerns on to the various State boards and committees that were being set up. A shipbuilding magnate became Shipbuilding Controller, a flour-milling magnate Flour Controller, a tea importer Tea Controller, and so on. Committees without end—Amen!

The trade union bureaucracy felt themselves to be cold-shouldered and loudly protested. "The assumption that the only brains in the country are in the heads of the Federation of British Industries and Big Business is one which has got to be corrected," roared Mr. Ernest Bevin, "for, as a matter of fact, most of the delays and unpreparedness so apparent to-day are due to the reliance of Departments of State upon the very limited advice of people who, after all, live in a very narrow world indeed." (*Transport Record*, October, 1939.)

"Mr. Burgin has combed the Directory of Directors and the more recent additions of Debrett for the personnel of the Supply Council," cried the magazine *Labour*, "while for his area officers he has resorted to the quarter-deck and the regimental mess. Labour problems, it is announced (as it were by an afterthought), will be handled by the Ministry of Labour. Nothing less than direct representation both on the Council and on the Area Consultative Committees will be regarded as satisfactory by trade unionists."

"Don't try to govern without us," the reformist bureaucracy were, in effect, saying to the Oligarchy. "You will find that a measure of co-operation with us is as essential to the smooth functioning of your system in peace as it is in war." And so the trade union bureaucracy muscled in in the apparatus of State control. They sat on local Labour Supply Committees, Area Boards of the Ministry of Supply, Coal Production Councils, Export Councils, Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Food, Fisheries Advisory Council, Advisory Council of Ministry of Shipping, and so on, throughout the whole network of committees. No wonder they purred like gross, contented tom-cats. Never before had they been accorded such recognition. Of course, things were far from perfect. The key positions in the machine were still occupied by people whose names were in the Directory of Directors, rather than in the Annual Report of the Trade Union Congress. As a recent exponent of the official trade union policy has put it:—

> "A striking feature of these various committees was that they were for the most part purely advisory in character. Only in a small number of cases, of which the Export Council was an example, were the committees with which the unions were associated provided with executive powers. In very few instances were prominent trade union leaders given responsible full-time functions in connection with the war effort. One of the exceptions was Mr. William Westwood, who was appointed by Mr. Churchill to the Merchant Shipbuilding and Repairs Department of the Admiralty, and who later became the Admiralty's principal Labour Adviser. It was not till the advent of Mr. Churchill's Government, with its complement of Labour Ministers, that reasonable advantage was taken of the contribution that the trade unions could make." (*Labour and the War*, by John Price, page 162.)

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From the advent of the Coalition, more jobs in the lower rungs of the apparatus were made available to trade union officials. A few area officers of the Ministry of Supply drawn from "the quarter-deck and the regimental mess" were replaced by district officials of the unions. The newly created Labour Supply officers were likewise largely recruited from this stratum, but the monopolists still held firm to the key positions.

Recognition—For Whom?

Does this constitute a wonderful advance for the Labour Movement? Before 1914 many big industries like railways and shipping were refusing to recognise trade unions. To-day the Government is recognising trade unions in all aspects of war work. Alas, there is a snag. When trade unions fought for recognition in the past they did so in order to secure positions from which to carry on a struggle to win certain improvements for their members. When they are accorded recognition to-day it is in order to secure their co-operation in drastically reducing the standard of life of their members, in order to enable monopoly capitalism to build up the resources for carrying on the war. To secure wider recognition for this latter purpose is a positive evil from the point of view of working-class interests.

The question that all workers are asking is, whose policy is the Government carrying through with regard to wages, prices and profits? It will be remembered that early in 1940 the General Council of the T.U.C. discussed a memorandum on these questions for presentation to the Joint Consultative Committee of trade union officials and employers' representatives. No agreement could be arrived at, however. Nevertheless, some policy is being carried through. Does this policy represent the interests of the workers or the big monopolists?

Here are three elements in the wage policy now being carried out:—

1. The supply of consumers' goods is being restricted by the Government.

2. Inflationary methods of financing the war are being adopted by the Government.

3. Wages are in most industries being pinned by arbitration tribunals at a level far below what is justified by the cost of living.

What are the results of this policy? The cost-of-living index has increased by 26 per cent., or 5*s.* 2*d.* in the £. This index does not, of course, adequately measure the real rise in the cost of living, because many of the articles in the index cannot be bought in sufficient quantities and have to be replaced by dearer substitutes. The London and Cambridge Economic Services (November, 1940) admits:—

> "It is not improbable that families who are trying to purchase the same kinds, or with reasonable variations, as a year ago find that the increase is considerably more than the official figure."

The Service estimates that for the central body of the working class, the cost of living was at least 5 per cent. more last October than was revealed in the official index. If this relation between the real cost of living and the official index still holds good, the real cost of living to-day is at least 31 per cent. higher than in August, 1939, or, in concrete terms, 6*s.* 2*d.* in the £ higher.

Now average wage rates in the same period advanced only 10 per cent. or 2*s.* in the £. (This average conceals important disparities between the workers in the various industries.)

The capitalist class may insist that we ought to take earnings on the basis of overtime, Saturday and Sunday work into account. Even on this basis the condition of the workers is deteriorating rapidly. If we exclude earnings during the frenzied spurt in June, we can say that even when they are inflated by overtime and Sunday work they do not equal the increased cost of living.

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The above-mentioned Economic Service calculated an increase in earnings between May, 1939, and October, 1940, of 25 per cent., and there has been no marked change between October and the present day. And do not forget that these increased earnings are subject to a heavier income tax than was the case in May, 1939. The deterioration in the standard of life of the workers is an inescapable fact. Do not let us forget, also, amidst all the current talk of equality of sacrifice that there is no minimum standard of life established below which no worker can fall, and there is no maximum standard of personal consumption beyond which the richer members of the community cannot rise.

Labour in Chains

Now such a situation arising in a period of full employment carried with it the danger of the workers using their industrial power to defend their standard of life. This the bourgeoisie and the Labour leaders have sought to anticipate by depriving the workers of the right to strike. This was not done in the face of a vast strike movement. Never, in fact, as the official figures demonstrate, were there so few strikes. It is because the wanton reduction of the workers' standard of life was likely to have given rise to such a movement that the right to strike was taken away, with the full consent of the Labour leaders. These gentry are always twitting the Communists with changing their policy. It is interesting to recall how they themselves changed their policy with regard to compulsory arbitration and industrial conscription.

When, on the eve of the war, the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act, 1939, was passed, the regulations which were based on it contained a clause which declared that no person would be guilty of an offence " by reason only of his taking part in, or peacefully persuading others to take part in, a strike." Sir Walter Citrine was most emphatic as to the meaning of this :—

> " Take this provision in conjunction with the assurance given by Sir Samuel Hoare and it will be clear that we have all the safeguard we can expect to get against arbitrary government action in respect of wages, working conditions and trade union action generally." (*The T.U.C. in Wartime*, December, 1939.)

Yet, in June, 1940, we see the gentlemen of the T.U.C. making a joint recommendation with the Confederation of Employers' Organisations in favour of taking away this very safeguard " against arbitrary government action in respect of wages and working conditions."

That was what the joint recommendation in favour of compulsory arbitration amounted to. And the T.U.C., which had given up this safeguard, had an agreement with either the employers or the Government in relation to wages, profits or prices. They had no guarantee that wages would rise in correspondence with the cost of living. They gave away the rights of the workers and received nothing in return.

How this compulsory arbitration works can be seen from the recent emergency award. The engineers put in for an increase of wages of 11*s.* 9*d.* on wage rates for a 47-hour week in June, 1940. Between that date and January, 1941, when the increase was granted, the cost of living index increased by 7½ per cent. or 1*s.* 6*d.* in the £. Say an engineer had a wage rate of £3 10*s.* 0*d.* per week. To keep that rate merely level with the cost of living as it was in June, 1940, when he made his application, he ought to have had an increase of 5*s.* 3*d.* per week. In actual fact he only got 3*s.* 6*d.*, which did not cover the rise in the cost of living which had taken place between the time of making the demand in June and the award of the tribunal in January.

" At any rate," our trade union bureaucrats will assert, " this is a different way of fixing wage rates from that in vogue in Nazi Germany." Let us see. In a speech delivered in October, 1940, Mr. Ernest Bevin said :—

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> " Our enemies rely on compulsion, the Gestapo, threats of the concentration camp, fear. Wages are regulated by our enemies by decrees from the top. Pay is cut without as much as ' by your leave.' In our case we have maintained the joint machinery which existed in peace-time. It is true we have introduced arbitration, which is essential under war conditions. We have recognised the right of our people to organise through their free and independent organisations, to express their desires and settle their problems. Our enemies abolished the trade unions, we have encouraged them and they have responded, and all the evidence goes to show that our system is giving better results than theirs."

Now let us examine the contrasted methods of wage-fixing. In Germany there are no unions, says Bevin. Wages are fixed from above by bureaucrats without as much as by your leave. What is the method here? The unions demand an increase of wages. The employers refuse. Both sides argue their case before a tribunal, which fixes the award to be given. If the unions do not like this award they are forbidden by law to take action against it.

Mr. Bevin stresses the difference of these two methods and overlooks their similarity. In both cases the wages are fixed not by a free process of collective bargaining, but by an organ of the monopoly capitalist state—in the British case the National Arbitration Tribunal. True, this tribunal hears the arguments of the unions. The corresponding body in Germany does not, but it has to take account of the moods of the workers, and in the course of this war, as in the case of decrees on overtime and Sunday work, it has been forced to revise decrees which it sought to impose.

We prefer the British arrangement for what it is worth, but is it not evident that in the last analysis wages in both cases are fixed by a State body, pursuing essentially the same aim, namely, to reduce civilian consumption to the lowest possible level in order to release resources for carrying on the war? In Germany the unions have been scrapped and the workers forcibly regimented in a Labour Front. In Britain the unions are retained for the present and the standard of life is lowered with the full co-operation of the Labour leaders, but in both cases the object aimed at is the same.

The Straight Jacket on Shop Stewards

In the lower organisations of the unions, however, there is still democracy. Indeed, the Shop Stewards, who direct the advanced posts of trade unionism in the factories, were never so determined to defend the interests of the workers as they are to-day. If the Labour bureaucracy has to fulfil its role of regimenting the workers effectively, it must break the power of the militants in the workshop and stifle discussion in all the lower organs of the trade union movement. There is a crying contradiction between the union branch and the shop committee, which seek to defend the workers' interests, and the upper strata of the bureaucracy which are co-operating with the Government in the effort to severely limit working-class consumption.

That is why the bureaucracy is driving against the Shop Stewards and against the Trades Councils. The Shop Stewards' Committees must be prevented, at all costs, from associating together on an area, district or national basis. The A.E.U. Executive threatens with instant expulsion anyone who dares to violate this rule. It is discussing ways and means of purging the Shop Stewards' Committees on the pretext that some Stewards are acting against " the best interests of the union." In point of fact the trade union leadership is following a path which seems to be leading to the creation of workshop organisations for co-operation with capitalism.

The Trades Councils are also "*gleichgeschaltet*" (made to fit into the official line). They must not pass resolutions that are against the policy of the

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" national movement." The bureaucrats at the head of a number of big unions threaten to disaffiliate councils that insist on discussing questions distasteful to the Coalition Government.

In Scotland the General Council of the Scottish Trade Union Congress has issued a memorandum of " guidance to chairmen," which gives the Trades Council Chairmen powers to over-rule the executive of the council and the elected delegates. Thus the stage is being set for the next stage—the drive for a more rigid conscription of labour.

Methods of Compulsion

There are impatient people amongst the Government's critics who are demanding a concentrated symmetrical scheme of regimentation for both Labour and Capital. The Labour leaders appear to be resisting this, but what is the reality behind the appearance ?

The monopoly capitalists will adopt such symmetrical schemes if all else fails. But they do not at this stage want a tightening up of the State regulation of labour in any form which might involve the interference of the State bureaucracy with the rackets which they themselves are operating behind the facade of " State control." There is a basis for an agreement between the unions and the monopolists here. The monopolists are left alone to pursue their private vested interests, while the unions are entrusted with the tasks of regimenting labour. State compulsion is kept in the background to be used only where the other measures are not yielding results. Thus, instead of a typical Prussian scheme of regimentation laid down in a series of compulsory decrees, we have a whole series of piecemeal pressures, which add up to an equally effective system of industrial conscription—while leaving the monopolists free to pursue their own interests with a minimum of " outside " (from the point of view of the monopolists) supervision.

That is the stage we have now reached. All the old problems of the previous period are beginning to present themselves in a more intensified form, and new problems are beginning to present themselves. Unrest is growing as the cost of living outstrips wages and as rations get more meagre, and to that is added the new problem of the regulation of labour supply on a mass scale. Hitherto this problem has only existed in reference to certain " bottlenecks " of production. Now it is becoming acute in reference to the mass of new factories coming into production.

There are two distinct problems here. There is the problem of spreading the skilled personnel over a wider range of factories, and there is the problem of the rapid training and transference of the people who are now being squeezed out of the so-called non-essential industries in order to render them available for war industry. In the first case there is, of course, considerable reluctance of heads of families to leave home in a period of intensive air-raids. In some cases if they receive the district rate for the area to which they are transferred it will be lower than that from which they have come. But even if they receive their own district rate, and their own customary earnings, plus lodging allowances, there will be overcrowding and a loss of all kinds of amenities. The workers will therefore very properly insist that an extra payment must be made to compensate them in this respect.

The main difficulty from the point of view of the vital interests of the workers is that employers and employment exchanges will use the transfer system to break up the Shop Stewards' organisation. Key Shop Stewards may be transferred on one pretext or another at the very moment that the influx of dilutees into the old factories is making a strong Shop Stewards' movement more necessary than ever. It is clear that this is a vital part of the front which must be defended at all costs.

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In the " registered " factories no employer is to be allowed to dismiss a worker, except for misconduct, and no worker is allowed to leave his employment and seek work elsewhere. By preventing the worker from leaving his employment another safeguard against arbitrary tyranny on the part of the employer is removed. Broadly speaking, a worker who is being intimidated and bullied in the workshop can do two things. He can combine with his fellows and threaten strike action. That right has gone. Or he can, when trade is good, leave his employment. That safeguard is now being taken away, and it is not being replaced by any other. Note that while the right of the employer to lay off men because he cannot find work for them is restricted, his right to dismiss men for misconduct is retained. The right to strike is gone, the right to leave one's employment is gone, but the employer's right to victimise is fully safeguarded.

The employer, if he wants to lay off men and is not allowed to do so, can appeal to a tribunal. The worker who wants to leave his employment can do likewise, but there is no right of appeal for the victimised worker. Never was there such a flagrant example of one class being allowed to retain its weapons of attack, while another is stripped of its weapons of defence.

With regard to the transfer of labour from industries producing consumers' goods, to war work, there is no great problem in this when it takes place directly from the one occupation to another, always provided that both occupations are in the same district. For the wages paid in the munitions industries compare favourably with the wages in the industries from which the workers are being drawn. But the idea evidently is to pass large numbers of workers through a course of training before employing them in war industries. But as the *Economist* has pointed out :—

> " Apart from unemployment, the worst paid and least attractive occupations are, in order, training for war work and serving in the Forces. Work on munitions and so on is admittedly well paid—for those already skilled and for those who are fortunate. But the prelude to it, the way of getting in, is poverty-stricken unemployment, poverty-stricken instruction, and costly migration. No tank traps are more obstructive, so long as the people concerned can hang on to the jobs they are in." (*Economist*, February 9, 1941.)

So as people in consumers' industries are thrown out of work, we are likely to see an increased denial of Labour Exchange benefit to those who voluntarily refuse to crawl past those tank obstructions.

Compulsion in the Workshop

One thing is lacking, however, in this apparatus of compulsion and that is that it has not yet an effective organ in the workshops. It is not merely necessary for the coalition to weaken the existing Shop Stewards' Committees ; it is necessary to secure a class co-operation organisation in the workshop, with the necessary powers of coercion always in the background. It may be with this in mind that Mr. Bevin has been talking recently about Joint Works Councils, with particular reference to the model of the engineering industry. Let us see what that model is.

In a well-organised engineering works there is usually a Shop Stewards' Committee consisting of the Shop Stewards of the various unions in the various departments. There is nothing in the agreement between the unions and the employers which obliges the latter to recognise such a body, although frequently they do so. What the agreement obliges the management to do is to recognise the individual shop stewards and to participate in a body called the Works Committee. The latter body consists of seven representatives of the management and seven of the workers, the agreement laying it down that the workers' representatives must be elected " by a ballot of the members of the Trade Union employed in the establishment." It will be noted that the non-unionist

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is not permitted to vote. (In practice the employers do not always insist on a ballot vote, but frequently recognise as the workers' side of a Works Committee seven representatives chosen by a larger Shop Stewards' Committee.) In such cases the Works Committee (on the workers' side) is merely a sub-committee of the Shop Stewards' Committee.

But assuming that the prescribed methods of electing the workers' side of a Works Committee were carried out, what do the management or the Government hope to gain in the sphere of Labour relations? We need only refer to what happened in a number of workshops during the years of economic crisis. On one pretext or another, the militant shop stewards were dismissed and the management, through its toadies, got a number of "tame" workers nominated for the Works Committee, amongst whom there might be one or two ex-militants whom the management had "sweetened." The workers who opposed the combination soon learned by bitter experience that victimisation soon followed. There was no keen competition for such Works Committees. The "chosen ones" of the management often got a walk-over. If now and then militant shop stewards in certain departments opposed the policy of the Works Committee they soon found that "their services were no longer required."

We are not in the midst of an unemployment crisis at the present moment, but if the union bureaucracy embarks on the purging of the Shop Stewards' Committees—supplemented by a certain amount of governmental activity devoted to the same end, then they might be able to secure the conditions for the election of tame works committees. Thus the Government and the management, instead of openly imposing their will on the workshops, would carry out their policy after consultation with an alleged representative organ of the workers. And, of course, as this would not work smoothly in all cases, the sanction of compulsory arbitration would be in the background. When a Works Committee failed to agree, instead of the question in dispute being a matter for subsequent discussion on a district and a national basis, compulsory arbitration would come into play at once.

Thus the aim is, by a multitude of different pressures, to secure, with the co-operation of the unions, the same results as Nazi Economy secures by more open police methods. Wages are pinned at a low level, labour is moved hither and thither at the will of the authorities, all the normal safeguards of the worker disappear. He is the pawn of monopoly capitalism and the monopoly capitalist State.

This is not yet Fascism, but it is a decisive clearing of the ground for an advance to Fascism, for the effective aim of these measures is to undermine the unions, split and demoralise the workers' ranks, and submit the worker to a wholesale regimentation which makes class action difficult. On this basis the union bureaucracy might be able, if the workers did not resist, to take the unions farther along the road to Fascism than did its opposite number in Germany and France, before monopoly capitalism decides to dispense with it. But that it will decide to dispense with it there is little doubt. What the bureaucracy are gambling with is the existence of the trade unions and of themselves as leaders.

A Workers' Programme

But, fortunately for the British people and for its capacity to resist German Imperialism no less than home-grown reaction, these measures are likely to be sternly opposed by the trade union membership. So far from regarding these measures as being necessary to prevent the enslavement of this country, trade unionists will see in them an attempt which, if it succeeded, would undermine their ability to resist foreign or domestic Fascism.

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But these measures cannot be opposed by a blank negative. The workers on their way to creating the political conditions which will enable them to escape from the war must be prepared to put forward their alternative policy to that of the monopolist oligarchy and its Labour lackeys. Perhaps the following suggestions will be found helpful.

The workers should consider whether it is possible to arrive at a more realistic wage policy than that of sectional appeals for wage increases. The writer believes that the basis for such a policy would be a demand for an immediate increase in the wages of all workers to at least the level of the increased cost of living. This wage policy requires to be linked up with a demand for improved rationing and an abolition of the right of those who dine in restaurants to consume unlimited amounts of rationed foodstuffs.

Next, it is essential to completely reorganise the transference schemes. It should be laid down that as Shop Stewards are the responsible workshop officials of the unions, there shall be no transference if the workers in the factory or the district committee of the union do not consent. As transference operates inequitably between the worker who is transferred and the worker who is not, the transferred worker has the right to expect (1) that in no cases shall his district rate be less than it was on the job from which he is transferred, and that he be given facilities to make the same earnings, and (2) when his transfer necessitates his living away from home he shall receive not only the existing lodging allowance, but compensation for the loss of amenities.

There should be a drastic reorganisation in the training centres and the payment of a living wage as an inducement to workers to undertake training voluntarily.

The workers must offer the most resolute opposition to all attempts to weaken their shop stewards' organisation, whether those attempts are initiated by the bureaucracy or by the management. All attempts to substitute the militant shop stewards' organisations by tame works committees should be resisted. Where the works committee form exists already, the shop stewards should refuse to give up the right to appoint the trade union members of the works committee and to control their policy. The right to arbitrary dismissal for misconduct should be taken away from the employers. No worker should be dismissed on any pretext without prior consultation with the Shop Stewards, and no Shop Steward should be dismissed without negotiation with the Shop Stewards' Committee and the District Committee.

That is the first line of defence, but it is only the first line. If the people of Britain are really to be defended, it will be seen that economy has to be taken out of the control of the monopolist oligarchy. It will not help us if we increase money wages and the supplies of available necessities decline.

We want a national food policy which, by aiding the farmer, improving the conditions and augmenting the numbers of agricultural workers, ensures an increased supply of food to the people and breaks the power of the powerful middleman interests, standing between the farmer and the consumer.

We want the banks to be taken over in order to put an end to the inflation policy now being pursued, and ensure the utilisation of credit in the people's interests.

We want to see the great industries taken over in order that an end will be put to the innumerable rackets whereby monopoly interests strangle the fullest development of production in their own interests.

In short, we want the programme of the People's Convention applied by a People's Government. In all the struggles for the defence of working-class liberties and organisations, we must shoulder the urgent necessity of this policy—the only policy to save the Labour Movement and prevent the enslavement of our people.

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The Fraud of the Cost of Living Index

BY PETER FIELD

MR. BEVIN has published, after much pressure, the results of the Government investigation into the cost of living, made in 1938. The Press has been busy explaining that the differences in results between the new investigation and the old one referring to conditions at the beginning of this century are due to improvement in the conditions of labour. In reality, however, the old index has been the laughing stock of serious students of labour conditions all over the world from the day of its publication up to the present, because it was already 35 years ago out of date or rather completely out of touch with the reality of working-class life.

The chief mistake of the old (and still published) index is the distribution of working-class expenditure. It assumes that the workers spend about 60 per cent. of their household expenditure on food and less than 5 per cent. on other things than food, rent, clothing, fuel and light. The new investigation shows that the workers actually spend only about 40 per cent. of their income on food and about 30 per cent. on sundries. If we realise that, as compared with 1914, sundry expenses have more than trebled while food prices have, according to the official index, not even doubled, then we can understand why the ruling class simply cannot give up an index which gives so much weight to food (the prices of which have risen relatively less than those of other commodities) and which gives so little weight to sundry items (the prices of which have risen so much above the average).

In the following table I give the old (and still published) index of the cost of living and a new index, based on the new investigations.

OLD AND NEW INDEX OF COST OF LIVING
(1914=100)

Years	*Old Index*	*New Index*	*New Index higher than Old Index*
1914	100	100	—
1927	168	172	2 per cent.
1928	166	171	3 „ „
1929	164	170	4 „ „
1930	158	165	4 „ „
1931	148	157	6 „ „
1932	144	154	7 „ „
1933	140	151	8 „ „
1934	141	152	8 „ „
1935	143	152	6 „ „
1936	147	155	5 „ „
1937	154	162	5 „ „
1938	156	164	5 „ „
1939	158	167	6 „ „
1940	185	195	5 „ „

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The new index is based on the following assumption: the prices of foodstuffs, rent, clothing, sundries, fuel and light, have moved since 1914 in exactly the same way as the old index indicates—but the workers spend upon these commodity groups that percentage of their income which the new investigation indicates.

The new index is consistently higher than the old index. All those workers who receive wage rates regulated by the cost of living index have been cheated out of considerable sums. If we assume that real wages have moved as unfavourably as they actually have done during the last 14 years, but if we assume that the new index had been published in 1927 instead of in 1941 and that real wages, therefore, since then had been computed with the new index given above, then we would find that the workers have lost through the publication of the old index the following gigantic sums of money :—

AMOUNTS LOST TO WORKERS THROUGH USE OF THE OLD COST OF LIVING INDEX

Year	*Total National Wage Bill** £ *millions*	*National Wage Bill Necessary to Maintain Real Wages if computed with New instead of Old Index of Cost of Living* £ *millions*	*Loss to Workers through Use of Old Index of Cost of Living* £ *millions*
1927 ...	1,660	1,700	40
1928 ...	1,630	1,680	50
1929 ...	1,640	1,700	60
1930 ...	1,540	1,610	70
1931 ...	1,430	1,520	90
1932 ...	1,390	1,490	100
1933 ...	1,420	1,530	110
1934 ...	1,510	1,630	120
1935 ...	1,590	1,690	100
1936 ...	1,720	1,810	90
1937 ...	1,870	1,970	100
1938 ...	1,910	2,010	100
1939 ...	1,800	1,900	100
1940 ...	2,000	2,110	110
Total Loss to the Workers, 1927 to 1940			£1,240,000,000
Average Yearly Loss in per cent. of wages			5 per cent.

Through the publication of the old inadequate index (which is still published) the workers have lost during the last 14 *years a total of* £1,240,000,000. *At the same time the employers have gained this amount or they have made a yearly saving of* 5 *per cent. The above computations show, therefore, that biased statistics have netted the employers an additional exploitation rate of* 5 *per cent.*

The least the trade unions ought to do is to demand an official re-calculation of the cost of living index (mine is, of course, only an approximate one, being based on the assumption that the individual official index figures for food, etc., are accurate). After this re-calculation back to 1927, the unions should demand payment for loss of wages through the publication of a misleading official cost of living index.

* 1927 to 1936 Professor Bowley's figures (Wages and Income in the United Kingdom since 1860), 1937 Kuczynski's figures (Hunger and Work), 1938 to 1940 my estimates.

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BOOK REVIEW

Engels' Masterpiece on Social Evolution

The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State, in the Light of the Researches of Lewis H. Morgan. By Friedrich Engels. (Lawrence & Wishart.) 1940. 6*s*.

FIRST published in 1884, this Marxist classic was not translated into English until 1904. It was a very bad translation, and has long been out of print. This new one, which has been done by Alick West with the assistance of Dona Torr, is a vast improvement on its predecessor, showing that Engels was, among other things, a most witty and entertaining writer.

Though written after Marx's death, the *Origin of the Family* was really a joint work, the fruit of many years of collaboration, and, in writing it, Engels made full use of Marx's MS. notes on Morgan's *Ancient Society*, which had appeared in 1877. As a bourgeois materialist, Morgan was the heir to Fourier, Millar, Ferguson, and Adam Smith; but, since capitalism developed later in America than in France and Britain, he was able, while maintaining the materialist tradition, to take his stand on a much wider basis of anthropological knowledge. The great achievement of his predecessors was their analysis of the growth of private property as the fundamental factor in the advance from barbarism to civilisation. Starting from the same point of view, which was, of course, conditioned by the development of capitalism itself, Morgan worked out a coherent and comprehensive theory of social evolution from its first beginnings down to the early history of ancient Greece and Rome; and this he did with a theoretical grasp so firm that, at the end of his task, almost transcending his bourgeois preconceptions, he predicted, in language reminiscent of the *Communist Manifesto*, the impending socialist revolution.

In the *Origin of the Family* Morgan's theory is expounded anew and reinterpreted in the light of dialectical materialism. Though they were the first to acclaim the importance of his discoveries, Marx and Engels were equally quick to see his bourgeois limitations—just as they had been the first to acclaim Darwin's *Origin of Species*, while also pointing out *his* limitations, at a time when he was being bell-book-and-candled by his academic colleagues for upsetting the Book of Genesis.

The social implications of Morgan's theory were so clear that it met with immediate and strenuous opposition; but his main conclusions have been confirmed by subsequent research, with the result that the opposition has only been able to maintain itself by constantly shifting the ground of attack. One of the keystones of his theory is the classificatory system of relationship—the kinship terminology characteristic of primitive society—which Morgan himself had discovered and interpreted as evidence of group-marriage. As early as 1876 the classificatory system was being explained away by McLennan as devoid of historical significance; but at the end of the century the classical Australian anthropologists—Howitt, Spencer and Gillen—had brought to light a mass of new data, including the actual practice, over a wide area of Australia, of the form of marriage which Morgan had postulated on the evidence of the classificatory system. In 1906 Thomas claimed to have reduced the theory of group-marriage to an absurdity; but a few years later, having refuted Thomas, Rivers was forced to admit that "sexual group-relations form a potentiality of human nature which we have got to accept, however repugnant they may be to our sentiments and traditions." In 1909 Kroeber contended that primitive terms of kinship "are only occasionally, and then indirectly, affected by social circumstances"; yet twenty years later, though at one with Kroeber in rejecting Morgan, Radcliffe-Brown was arguing that the kinship terminology of the Australians could be completely explained by their existing social circumstances, without reference to their past. In 1929 Lowie published his *Primitive Society*, designed to give the *coup-de-grace* to Morgan's *Ancient Society*, which he described as an "out-of-date text-book" possessing no more than an historical interest—exactly what J. M. Keynes has said of *Capital*; yet five years later the fiftieth anniversary of the *Origin of the Family* was celebrated in the Soviet Union by the publication of two large volumes of commentary, covering an even wider range than the original, vindicating the main conclusions of Morgan and Engels, and carrying them into new fields of anthropology, archaeology and ancient history.

Enough has been said to show that Morgan's bourgeois opponents have only demolished him by demolishing one another. The result is that at the present day the bourgeois camp is in a state of hopeless confusion, as indeed is confessed in the following remarks by Malinowski:—

> "As a member of the inner ring I may say that, whenever I meet Mrs. Seligman or Dr. Lowie, or discuss matters with Radcliffe-Brown or Kroeber, I become at once aware that my partner does not understand anything in the matter, and I end usually with the feeling that this also applies to myself. This refers to all our writings on kinship, and is fully reciprocal."

And there—after fifty years of "progress"—we may leave them.*

The next step lies with the Marxists. The task that awaits them is immense. Both Morgan and Engels made it quite clear that they regarded their conclusions as subject to

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modification in the light of further research, and it would, of course, be a falsification of Marxism to treat Engels' conclusions, as distinct from the method by which he reached them, as final. What we have to do is to apply that method to the vast amount of material that has accumulated since his time, bringing order into chaos; and in that way, by re-examining and, where necessary, modifying his conclusions, we shall demonstrate anew the validity of his method. It must suffice for the present to point out one or two of the major problems that demand attention.

In their account of exogamy, Morgan and Engels assume that in-breeding is necessarily, or at least generally, injurious to human beings living in primitive conditions. Is this assumption correct, and does it really explain the facts? One of the striking things about the rule of exogamy in its simplest form is that, while in certain directions it prohibits the inter-marriage of kindred to an infinitely remote degree, in other directions it permits marriage between first cousins and even between parents and children.

Morgan collected about 150 terminologies of kinship. The total to-day is about twice that number. None of his successors has displayed anything approaching his energy in collecting them, and his is still far the largest collection that has been made—in fact, his *Systems of Consanguinity* (1871) remains the standard work on the subject. With the additional evidence now available it can, I think, be proved that he was right (as against Rivers) in regarding the "Hawaiian" type as primitive not derivative, and that, as he conjectured, the Indo-European terminology goes back to a classificatory system of the normal type.

Further, there are two important questions of method. The first may be put briefly as follows. The Australian tribes of the present day stand roughly at the cultural stage reached in Europe at the close of the paleolithic epoch. How far can our knowledge of modern Australia be used for the understanding of prehistoric Europe? Gordon Childe maintains that "the assumption that any savage tribe to-day is primitive in the sense that its culture faithfully reflects that of much more ancient men is gratuitous." This is very superficial. Of course the resemblance is not exact, but it still remains true that the two sets of data can be co-ordinated. The culture of the modern Australians has not remained stationary—it has continued to develop, but only in directions determined by the mode of production at which their economic development has been arrested. What we have to do is to analyse the special features of Australian culture due to this complication, and we shall not be deterred from doing that by Gordon Childe's warning that such a use of the comparative method is "illegitimate."

At the present day there is very little left of the Australian aborigines except groups of detribalised stragglers hanging round the missions and sheep-stations. A good deal of research has been done on these remnants in recent years, and from it far-reaching conclusions have been drawn, often at variance with the results obtained by earlier workers. General conclusions based on such evidence must be treated with the greatest caution. What is needed here is a systematic study of the effects on primitive culture of capitalist exploitation, and that is a task which bourgeois anthropologists cannot perform, because it would mean taking up a critical attitude to capitalism. They are prepared to spin endless theories about primitive society, but not to analyse their own. That way lies the *Manifesto*.

I have said nothing about the chapters on Greece and Rome because, though they are of great value, the problems involved are less fundamental, nor about the brilliant historical analysis of the social relations between the sexes. Marx and Engels foresaw that, just as the growth of private property involved the subjection of women, so the socialist revolution would effect their liberation. That has been Marxist theory for sixty years, and the proof lies in the Soviet Union, where there has already arisen, as Engels predicted in this book, "a generation of men who never in their lives have known what it is to buy a woman's surrender with money or any other social instrument of power; a generation of women who have never known what it is to give themselves to a man from any other considerations than real love, or to refuse to give themselves to their lover from fear of the economic consequences."

PROFESSOR GEORGE THOMSON.

* The most recent and comprehensive treatment of the history of marriage is *The Mothers*, by Robert Briffault (1927), where, with a wealth of data and a grasp of scientific method far beyond the compass of Malinowski's "inner ring," Morgan's theory of group-marriage is shown to be fundamentally correct.

Sons of the Commune

The Trial of the French Communist Deputies. By Andre Marty. (Lawrence & Wishart.) 2*s*.

ON MARCH 18 we honour the seventieth anniversary of the immortal Paris Commune, the first time in history that working-class revolution triumphed; that "storming Heaven," as Marx called it, which even in its ultimate defeat bore the most precious lessons for the final victory, specifically inspiring Lenin and the Bolshevik Party and remaining to-day as rich a source as ever to guide revolutionary thought and action.

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In 1941 the memory of the Commune has a peculiar significance for all of us. We may well recall those opening sentences from the most famous of all analyses of the Commune, Marx's *Civil War in France* :—

> " Paris, however, was not to be defended without arming its working class. . . . But Paris armed was the Revolution armed. A victory of Paris over the Prussian aggressor would have been a victory of the French workman over the French capitalist and his State parasites. In this conflict between national duty and class interest the Government of National Defence did not hesitate one moment to turn into a Government of National Defection."

How apt are those seventy-year-old words to-day ! They may indeed be set side by side with the passage in this present work where Marty tells how in the fateful days of May, 1940, the French bourgeoisie trembled,

> " not on account of the invasion of France, but at the thought that the betrayed people might ' take their affairs into their own hands,' as the Communist Party appealed to them to do. Above all, they feared the proletariat of Paris. They were haunted by the spectre of the Commune ! "

There is no need to push the parallel ; but we cannot escape comparing the vile miasma of lies and slander that was spewed forth to shroud the Commune in 1871 with its even viler contemporary version, launched against the steadfast and incorruptible Communist leaders of France's toiling majority. The great virtue of Marty's proud and challenging book is that it dissipates this foul fog, demonstrates beyond a doubt the integrity and correctness of the French Communist Party's line throughout, and mercilessly exposes the true face of the fearful creatures who make up the leadership of all the other political parties in the country, not least the " Socialists " (including the Nazi-connected ultra-pacifist Munichcers who made a speciality of denouncing the Communists as Fifth Columnists !).

The trial of the Communist deputies was the peak of the anti-Communist campaign ; here its whole criminality and chicanery are devastatingly exposed. The unprecedented secrecy, the abominable treatment of the accused, the vain attempts to browbeat and suborn, are here all recorded. It is a scorching picture of a vicious mockery of a " trial," comparable only with Leipzig (which was at least in public) ; and it shows how the accused bore themselves like real Dimitrovs.

In every intervention, and in their ringing final declaration, these " heirs of the Communards," as they justly called themselves, flung defiance at their accusers, took the offensive against the ruling class and the regime which was encompassing the destruction of France. They expressed with unshakable vigour and conviction their confidence in the future victory of the French people and their faith in Communism. In their strong hands, and in those of the class they will lead to victory, lies the certain hope of regeneration of the mighty French nation. Then, and for all time, the Commune will have had its *revanche.*

G. A. H.

The Programme of the People's Convention
CAN ONLY BE WON BY THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES

Play YOUR part by sending YOUR delegates
to the

London and Home Counties Convention

ROYAL HOTEL, W.C.1 16th MARCH, 1941
Full details from London Council, 24, High Holborn, W.C.1

London Convention Eve Dance

SAT., MARCH 15th, 5–10 p.m. ROYAL HOTEL
WOBURN PLACE
PHIL CARDEW & HIS BAND. EXHIBITION DANCE
SPOT PRIZES :: FULLY LICENSED

Tickets strictly limited, price 2/-. Apply London Council, 24, High Holborn, W.C.1

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More Groups

THE list we give this month again shows additional Discussion Groups. We have added, in italics, the names of places where the formation of a Group is in preparation, so that interested readers can get in touch and give their aid.

We want, once more, to urge upon readers the value of these Groups, devoting themselves exclusively to discussion and thereby giving their members opportunity for getting clear on various problems which often get insufficient attention.

Readers who want to attend a group should write to us for particulars.

LONDON AND DISTRICT

ACTON
Camden Town
CLAPTON
Edgware (1)
Enfield
Finchley (North)
Forest Gate
Hampstead Garden Suburb
HARROW WEALD
Highgate
Hornchurch
Kenton (1)
Morden (Surrey)
Mill Hill (1)
ORPINGTON
Pinner
St. Pancras
Stamford Hill
Upminster
WEMBLEY
Woodford (Essex)

PROVINCES

Abercynon
Aberystwyth
Aylesbury
Banstead
BARNSLEY
Barrow-in-Furness
Bath
Birmingham
Bishop's Stortford
Blackburn
Bootle
Bournemouth
Bowhill (Fife)
Bridgend
Bristol
Bromley (Kent)
Carshalton (2)
CHIPPENHAM
Cambridge
Carlisle
Coatbridge
Cowdenbeath
Derby
Dumfries
DURHAM
East Grinstead
EDLINGTON (Doncaster)
Edgbaston (Birmingham)
EDMONTON
Farnham
Glasgow
Godalming
GRANTHAM
Gravesend
Greenock
Halifax
Harpenden
Hyde (Cheshire)
Leamington (3)
Letchworth
Liverpool
Llandudno
Luton
Manchester 16
MANCHESTER & SALFORD
Manchester
Minehead
Moorpark (Renfrew)
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